

# PLEASURE POINT

## COMMUNITY PLAN

### CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter describes the Pleasure Point area's existing conditions in terms of its following elements:

- Natural systems,
- Social and cultural resources,
- Land use (including parks and open space), ,
- Urban design and existing development standards, and
- Transportation, circulation and infrastructure.

Within these facets, there are multiple assets, issues and opportunities. Subsequent chapters of this Plan present policy change recommendations to enhance the uniqueness of Pleasure Point by building on the area's assets, addressing the challenges and maximizing opportunities.

The following analysis was gleaned through literature review, interviews with community members and experts, feedback at community workshops, mapping and GIS analysis, and site visits observing the social and physical conditions of the Pleasure Point study area.

Aerial Photo of Pleasure Point Study Area



## NATURAL SYSTEMS

This section provides an overview of the natural systems within the project area, including a review of the ecological conditions that influence and will be affected by potential future development in Pleasure Point. Numerous noteworthy natural resources define Pleasure Point, including Monterey Bay, Moran Lake, Moran Creek, Corcoran Lagoon and Rodeo Gulch. These natural assets, as well as negative urban conditions that threaten their health, are described and illustrated on the following pages (see Diagram 2.1: Natural Systems located at the end of the chapter).

### Assets

**Moran Lake and Creek:** Moran Lake and Creek are prominent natural features of Pleasure Point, providing visual and recreational amenities. The Lake is a coastal lagoon fed by Moran Creek. A trail runs along its western edge, providing bike and pedestrian route through the neighborhood. The surrounding eucalyptus groves provide the lake and trail with shade and serve as landmarks for the neighborhood and perform a critical function in providing seasonal roosting sites and shelter from the wind for migratory Monarch Butterflies.

Monterey Bay National Marine  
Sanctuary Interpretive Trail  
Exhibit



Trail at Moran Lake Park





**Monarch Butterfly Habitat:** According to the Management Plan for the Monarch Butterfly Habitat at Moran Lake County Park, Moran Lake supports the second largest overwintering monarch butterfly population in the County (an estimated 20% of the County population and 5% of the statewide population). The thick Eucalyptus grove surrounding Moran Lake serves as an important habitat for the butterflies (see right) that roost in the protection of the trees during the winter months. According to the Management Plan for Monarch Butterfly Habitat at the East Cliff Facility of the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District (i.e., the Lode Street facility adjacent to Moran Lake), tree loss due to natural causes, lack of on-going tree maintenance and soil failure from poor drainage has become an increasing concern. Both these management plans provide guidelines for acceptable tree removal, principles of tree pruning methods, recommendation for replacement tree plantings, and understory vegetation opportunities.

Monarch Butterfly



**Corcoran Lagoon and Rodeo Creek:** Corcoran Lagoon (see below) is south of Portola Drive, between Coastview Drive and 24th Avenue. The tall KSCO-AM radio towers that rise out of the lagoon serve as a landmark to many community members. Located at the mouth of Rodeo Creek, Corcoran Lagoon is valuable as an expansive visual relief and a popular birding spot. The lagoon's mudflats and marshy edges attract ducks, roosting terns and gulls, herons and shorebirds. Elegant Terns gather in large flocks in summer and Common Terns can be found in early fall. Various herons and egrets frequent this site year-round. The lagoon flows into Monterey Bay at Corcoran Lagoon Beach. A path along the lagoon's western edge connects the Live Oak Public Library and Coastview Drive to the beach.

KSCO Radio Towers at Corcoran Lagoon



**Pacific Ocean Coastline and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS):**

The neighborhood's southern boundary is Monterey Bay. This portion of the Pacific coastline is heralded for many marine resources, including its world-renowned concentration of quality surf breaks. Coastal residents on the eastern side of Moran Lake overlook rocky intertidal areas while residents on the western side of Moran Lake overlook a long sandy beach. The coastal and offshore waters are part of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, a federally protected area that supports one of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems, including kelp forests that are home to a significant population of the endangered Southern sea otter.

Southern Sea Otter in Offshore Kelp Bed





**Mediterranean Climate:** Santa Cruz has a Mediterranean climate with mild summers subject to coastal fog. A warm summer day at Pleasure Point attracts surfers, tourists and residents. The comfortable weather and plentiful natural resources it affords are important assets, which can help Pleasure Point residents maintain a healthy, outdoor lifestyle. In the winter months, cooler but still relatively mild temperatures generally prevail, with occasional rain/wind storms. Winter generally affords the best conditions for surfing at Pleasure Point, as the swells are usually larger and more frequent than during the summer months.

26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Beach



## Issues and Opportunities

**Urban Runoff Pollutants:** The water quality of Moran Lake, Corcoran Lagoon and Monterey Bay and the impacts of polluted storm water runoff are important concerns. The Moran Lake Water Quality Study and Conceptual Restoration Plan and the Pleasure Point Road Improvement/Storm Water Treatment System Monitoring Project both highlight concerns regarding pollutants from the urban watershed. Without filtration or detention devices, storm water runoff flushes numerous vehicular and other urban runoff pollutants that damage the coastal lagoon and Monterey Bay ecosystems, as well as threaten the health of surfers and swimmers. (See photos of vehicular emission and open stormwater drainage in bottom left and center).

The East Cliff Drive Stabilization and Parkway Project will include upgrades to major street drainage outfalls with improved storm water filtration devices. (See photo of damaged East Cliff Drive below). The filtration units will be installed as part of parkway improvements. The project will reduce the number of outfalls. Water quality “best management practices” including source controls and treatment should be considered in future developments to reduce the amount of contamination brought into the water bodies.

**Urbanization Impacts on Water Bodies:** While Pleasure Point presently has substantial natural features, urbanization has had significant impacts on those natural features. Parts of Moran Creek remain an open riparian corridor while other parts have been undergrounded or routed into a concrete channel. Moran Lake has also been reduced in size due to filling. Encroachment of development on water bodies not only poses flooding risks, but also negatively affects wildlife habitat and downstream ecosystems.



**Cliffside Erosion:** Much of the coastal area of Pleasure Point sits on a bluff that is experiencing ongoing erosion and cliff retreat as the result of natural processes. Heavy storms and rainfall in January 1994 caused a 50-foot stretch of bluff top area and roadway to break off. Emergency patches were installed in 2004 to shore up crumbling cliff face sections. The recently approved and permitted East Cliff Drive Stabilization and Parkway Project will provide more comprehensive stabilization of the cliff areas for continued public access to the coastline and for the protection of underground infrastructure beneath East Cliff Drive (i.e., domestic water supply and sewage conveyance pipelines). However, existing homes (particularly on the ocean side of East Cliff) and other coastal access locations may continue to be under the risk of cliff erosion and retreat. (Photo below shows eroding backyards of beachside homes). This indicates a need for a better, more coordinated response to shoreline retreat in the Pleasure Point area. Despite the soon-to-be-constructed seawall along the bluff top stretch of East Cliff Drive in Pleasure Point, there will continue to be a need for additional rip-rap and/or other coastal protection structures elsewhere in the area. An effort should be undertaken to comprehensively coordinate the installation and standardize the design of such structures.

Coastal Armoring Near 26th Avenue





## **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

This section provides an overview of Pleasure Point's social and cultural history and identifies specific sites that have significant history in the neighborhood. Pleasure Point has had a somewhat subversive, but wholly original, history. First known as Point Soquel, the area became the property of Irish wheat farmers after California was ceded to the United States from Mexico.<sup>1</sup> The area was farmed for decades. In 1902, John J. Henchy purchased property on the southern-most tip and built a saloon. This building still exists as the present-day "Road House" on East Cliff Drive.

The point soon began to attract visitors coming to the coast to fish and hunt. Small homes were developed along the cliffs. However, the area remained an agricultural area for small farms and orchards. During the Prohibition era in the 1920s, the Road House is reputed to have become one of the busiest speakeasies in Santa Cruz due to its strategic location for bootleggers to drop off illegal liquor. At that time, Pleasure Point was overlooked by law enforcement agencies; a group called the Pleasure Point Night Fighters formed to fight fires and protect the community.<sup>2</sup>

Once the Depression and the end of Prohibition slowed Pleasure Point's rebellious culture and the work of the Night Fighters, housing proliferated, with a mixture of tourist cottages and year-round luxury homes. The Road House was reportedly sold and turned into a grocery store/gas station and hotel. With the rise of surfing in the 1950s and 1960s, Pleasure Point's character evolved into the relaxed, coastal community it's known for today. The advent of neoprene wetsuit technology in the late 50's and early 60's greatly increased the popularity of year-around surfing in Pleasure Point's frigid waters. Wetsuit technology and surf industry pioneer Jack O'Neill is still one of the area's most prominent residents. In the 1960s, the Night Fighters re-emerged as a new incarnation of volunteer community service workers. Residents were upset with increasing trash on beaches and lack of trashcans. The Night Fighters became organized, then acquired trashcans and began sharing the responsibility of emptying the trash weekly. This began the regular event of cleaning local beaches known as "Pack Your Trash Day" that continues to this day.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Mid-County Post*, July 11-July 24, 2006, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Pack Your Trash website: <http://www.packyourtrash.com/aboutus.html>

## Assets

**Relaxed Coastal Community:** A casual walk through Pleasure Point will inevitably display mothers pushing strollers, excited surfers heading out to the waves, and most likely, an off-leash dog running free. These are all indicators of a tranquil beach lifestyle that is a large draw of Pleasure Point and central to its success as a safe community.

**Age Diversity:** Pleasure Point is a diverse neighborhood that appeals to residents of all ages. Young teenagers on bikes and skateboards pass by elders walking their dogs. Pleasure Point's ability to attract residents of such varied lifestyles is a testament to its character and amenities and is a notable asset itself.

Public Use by Residents of All Ages in Pleasure Point Area



**Family-friendly Sense of Community:** The neighborhood streets serve as the community's living room. Because most streets do not allow through-traffic, many of them can accommodate basketball games, children on bikes, and spontaneous encounters with neighbors. The long history of community service by the Pleasure Point Night Fighters and Pack Your Trash efforts (see below left) is further evidence of the area's strong community. These types of interactions are becoming less common in American cities nationwide and have been identified as desirable assets within Pleasure Point.

Sense of Community





## Issues and Opportunities

**Changing Demographics:** Though this planning process is not charged with conducting a detailed market and demographic analysis, it is apparent that the neighborhood's prime coastal location is attracting wealthy homeowners. The cost of land is lower than in other coastal areas, making Pleasure Point an ideal place for newcomers to retire, vacation or build their dream houses, which are often much larger than the traditional Pleasure Point beach cottages. The shift in residents' income levels and tastes has been noted as a source of conflict between neighbors.

Residence on East Cliff Drive



### Demographic Data

| 2000 Census Data                               | Pleasure Point Area* | County as a Whole |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|
| Average Household Size                         | 2.24 persons         | 2.71 persons      |
| % Vacation Homes                               | 6.9%                 | 5.1%              |
| Owner Occupied Units                           | 53.7%                | 60.0%             |
| Renter Occupied Units                          | 46.3%                | 40.0%             |
| College Grads.                                 | 39.8%                | 35.1%             |
| % Married                                      | 35.1%                | 48.6%             |
| Family Households (w/kids)                     | 24.6%                | 31.9%             |
| Foreign Born                                   | 8.0%                 | 18.2%             |
| % Hispanic Origin                              | 12.5%                | 26.5%             |
| Recent (last 5yrs.) arrivals from out of state | 6.4%                 | 4.5%              |
| Median HH Income in 1999                       | \$42,673             | \$53,998          |
| Persons Living Below Poverty Line              | 14.2%                | 11.9%             |
| Houses Built Pre-1960                          | 42.8%                | 33.8%             |
| Median Home Value (1999)                       | \$419,600            | \$377,500         |

\* Data is for the "Opal Cliffs Census Designated Place" (or CDP), which includes Opal Cliffs, Pleasure Point (to Corcoran Lagoon) and some of the area north of Portola Drive (i.e., to the railroad tracks)

**Apparent Rise in Vacation Homes:** As Pleasure Point becomes more desirable for vacationers, more conflicts between full time, long term residents and tourists are likely to occur given their differences in lifestyle, schedules and the transient nature of the growing population. Year-round residents are not eager to live on a block where many or all other homes are unoccupied during the majority of the year, due to safety concerns and how it detracts from the community. In addition, seasonal/short term rentals can result in neighbor disturbing activities/parties, as well as impacts on available parking and smooth circulation in the tourist season.

Beach Rental Property



**Lack of a Central Community Gathering Space:** Although Pleasure Point has unparalleled access to natural resources, there is no public indoor gathering space to serve as the community's center. Some residents have identified this as an issue, but without further discussion it is not something that can be addressed in this Plan.

## LAND USE

Pleasure Point is a predominantly residential area with commercial corridors along two edges - Portola Drive and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. A few small neighborhood-serving commercial uses are scattered within the neighborhood. There are a variety of housing types, ranging from single-family homes, duplexes, apartments, condominiums and mobile homes. In addition to these commercial and residential uses, there are several County park facilities (i.e., Floral Park on 38<sup>th</sup>, Pleasure Point Park, Moran Lake Park, and the soon-to-be-constructed East Cliff Dr. Parkway), a private multi-use community facility/day camp, and a well-used visitor parking and restroom/shower facility at "The Hook" surf spot at the end of 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Located in the center of the study area, abutting Moran Creek is the Santa Cruz County Department of Public Works' Lode Street Sanitation Facility (which treats and pumps wastewater from much of the County out to the City's treatment plant at Neary Lagoon).

## Assets

**Strong Residential Fabric:** The County of Santa Cruz's General Plan categorizes the majority of Pleasure Point's residential density as urban medium residential, with some urban high residential (see diagram on page 21 of General Plan Land Use Map). This creates a greater variety of housing types than an entirely single-family neighborhood while not being overly dense. More detailed identification and analysis of lot configuration, neighborhood subareas and housing patterns will be covered in the next section of Urban Design & Existing Development Standards.

**Value of Natural Open Space:** The open space surrounding Moran Lake (below left) and Corcoran Lagoon as well as the coastal promenade and beach access (below right), provide an abundance of passive recreation areas for walking and experiencing the outdoors. The prevalence of these open space/park land uses and the area's beaches increase the financial value of the other land uses within the neighborhood.

Park Access

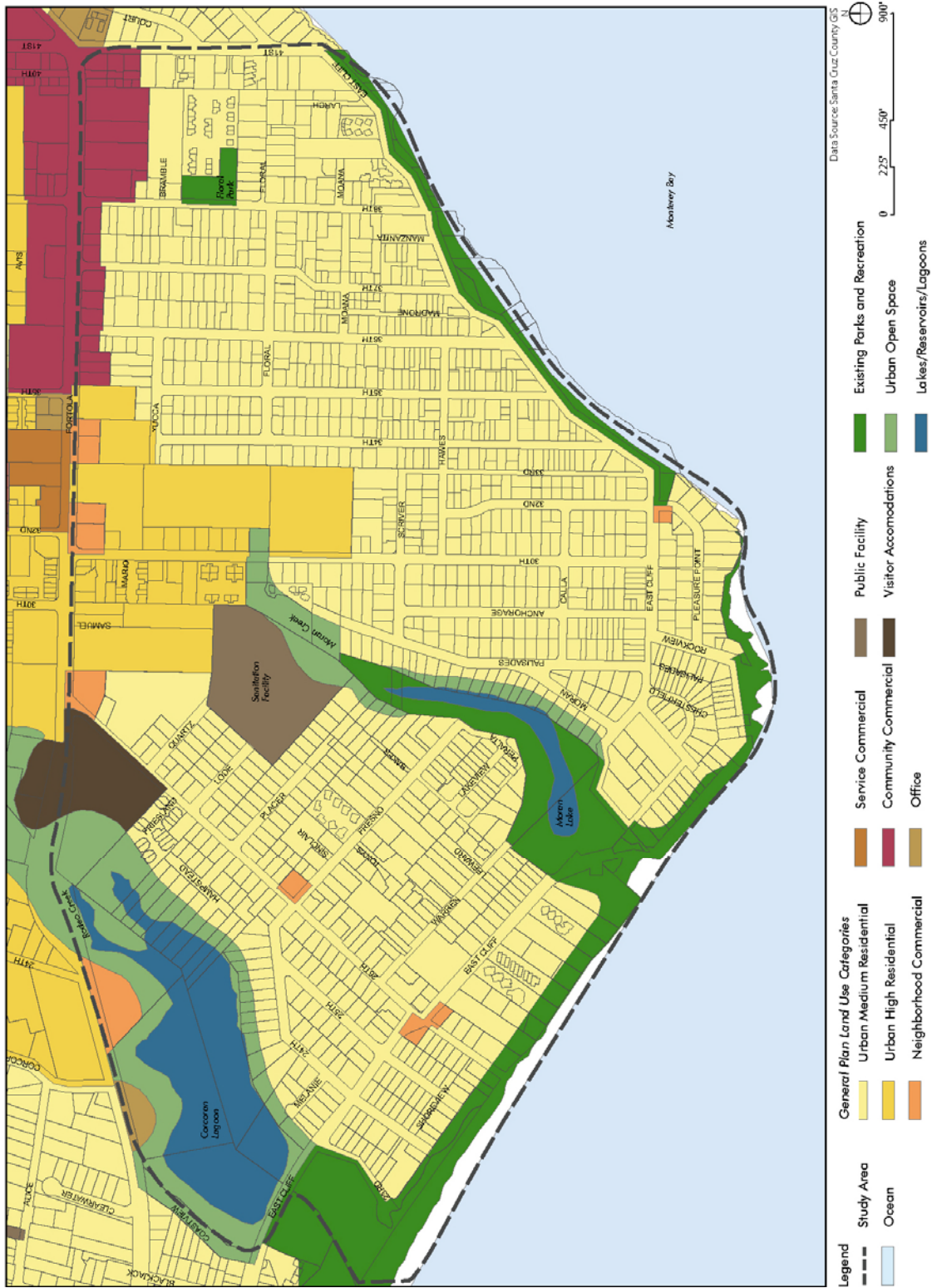


Beach Access





Land Use Designations in 1994 General Plan



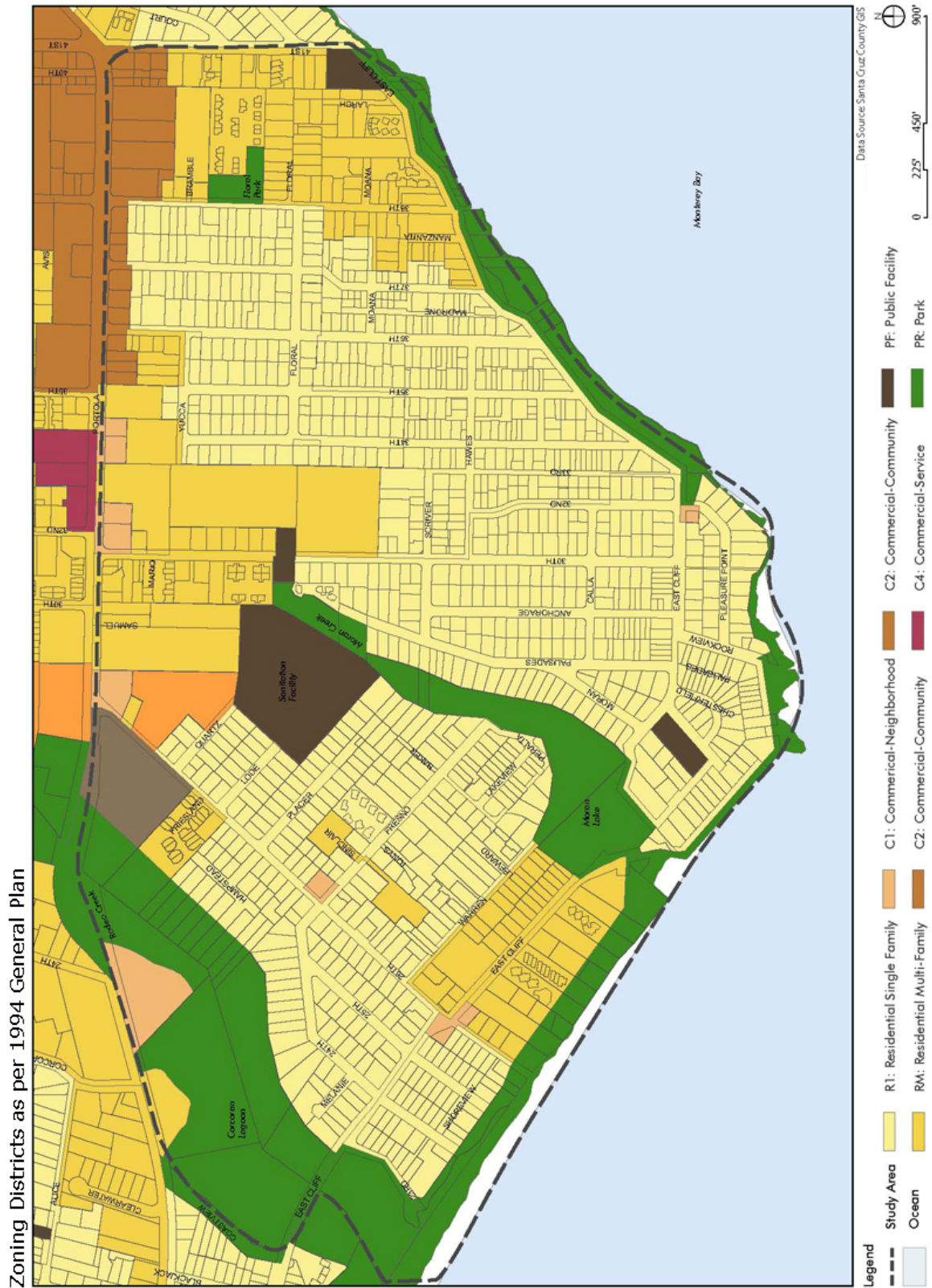
**Established Locally-Owned Commercial Services:** The commercial corridors and small commercial pockets feature a variety of locally-owned retail, including a well balanced mix of restaurants, neighborhood services and small shops. A sprinkling of small-scale commercial activities occurs within the residential neighborhoods of the study area. These services include two small local markets. (A small strip of offices, hair salons and a pilates studio are located on East Cliff Drive and 26th Avenue - See below).

The largest-scale commercial activities occur just outside the study area boundary on Portola Drive and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. A Pleasure Point Commercial Area Plan was completed in August 1995 after a series of six community workshops with area residents, commercial property owners, and merchants who contributed their ideas and visions for the commercial activities located along Portola Drive and lower 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue in the Pleasure Point area.

#### Small-scale Commercial Development









## Issues and Opportunities

**Separated Land Uses:** Though the area features quality residences and busy commercial corridors, the few parcels zoned for commercial use limit the number of shops and amenities within the neighborhood core (see diagram of Zoning Districts Map on page 23). While this separation of uses may require residents to drive to beyond the neighborhood boundaries for major shopping needs, including groceries, the retail areas at the periphery of the neighborhood and in the neighborhood's interior allow community members to shop for smaller/convenience items near to where they live. According to the Pleasure Point Commercial Area Plan prepared by the Santa Cruz County Redevelopment Agency, Portola Drive has historically been a thriving community-serving retail corridor. However, like most local commercial areas, it had a hard time competing with the mall and highway-oriented developments that started appearing in the 1970's (e.g., the nearby Capitola Mall/41st Avenue regional commercial center).

There are, however, recent signs of renewal in the area. One of the outcomes of the Commercial Area Plan was a detailed action plan outlining a series of tasks for the County, Redevelopment Agency and property owners to undertake in the short- and long-term. Since the adoption of the Plan, several of these tasks have been successfully completed including the undergrounding of overhead utility lines, the construction of sidewalks, curbs and gutters, bus pull-outs and shelters, and landscaping and roadway and storm drain improvements.

**Limited Number of Parks for Recreational Use:** Though the natural resources in the neighborhood are exceptional, the community has a limited amount of recreational open space. Various groups compete to make the most of the soon to be renovated Floral Park, off of 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, with its multiple recreational uses, such as the large lawn area (formerly a volleyball court) and a children's play structure.

## **URBAN DESIGN AND EXISTING DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

Pleasure Point's built environment can be described as eclectic. Shaped by a loose grid of sometimes meandering streets, large natural open spaces, and a variety of parcel shapes and sizes, Pleasure Point's original housing stock took the form of small beach cottages and bungalows that were constructed to fit into the irregular urban fabric. Refer to diagram "Existing Development Density/Building Footprints" on page 27 to see the pattern of development within the neighborhood. Over the years, parcels were subdivided, other building styles filled in the gaps, and an array of landscaping transformed what was once farmland into a tightly-knit beach village.

Regional growth pressures, increasing property values and low interest rates have made Pleasure Point's housing increasingly desirable. As a result, new homebuyers are purchasing lots with small existing homes and replacing them with larger structures or making significant second-floor additions. The number of teardowns throughout the neighborhood has increased considerably. As a result, the small-scale beach town atmosphere of Pleasure Point is undergoing noticeable changes.

The community of Pleasure Point is not alone in its desire to regulate new construction. Other nearby jurisdictions have attempted to reduce the size of new home construction in coastal areas. For example, Capitola City Council recently decided to restrict the total floor area of a new home to 49 percent of the lot size (a 0.49 "Floor-Area Ratio" or FAR), and less for larger lots, whereas previously, the City allowed homes to have a floor area up to 60 percent of the lot size (0.6 FAR). The challenge in Pleasure Point is retaining the eclectic quality of historic development without making the development standards so rigorous that the neighborhood's building design creativity is lost.

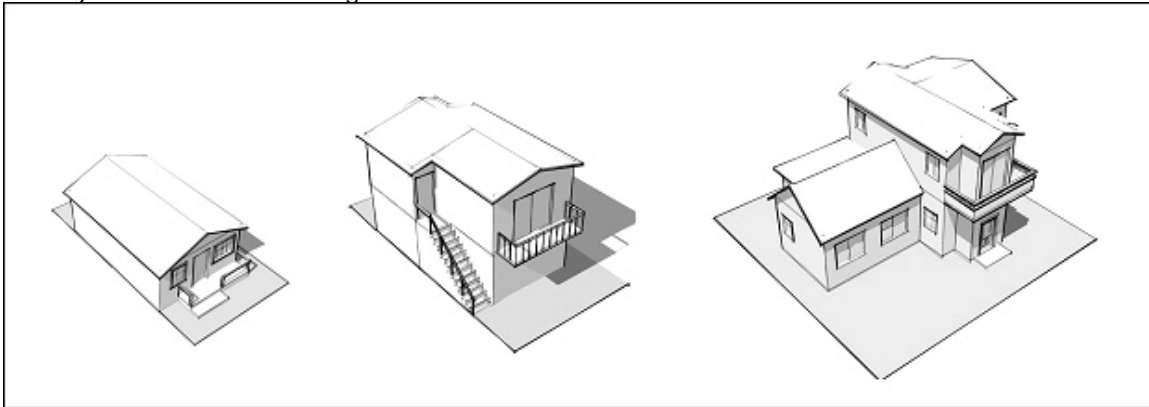
The approval process for new development in the Pleasure Point project study area falls into two categories. In the Discretionary Approval area (a.k.a. "Coastal Appealable Area"), encompassing the parcels that generally lie within 300-feet of the coastline or near coastal streams/wetlands, Coastal Development Permits are required (involving design review and discretionary approval by County Planning at a public hearing), the approval of which may be appealed by members of the public or the California Coastal Commission. Outside of the Coastal Appealable Area is the Building Permit-Only area, where new home construction and remodels require only a "ministerial" building permit approval from the County Planning Department (no public hearing).

## Assets

**Lot and Building Size Variation:** The wide range of lot sizes in Pleasure Point is a significant factor in the eclectic nature of the area. Sizes of lots range from under 2,000 square feet to over 12,000 square feet. Furthermore, small and large size lots sit side by side in many areas within Pleasure Point. There is also tremendous diversity in the configuration of lots between 20 feet and 100 feet wide and between 40 feet and 250 feet deep. Refer to diagram “Parcel Size Variation” on page 28 to see the diversity of lot sizes.

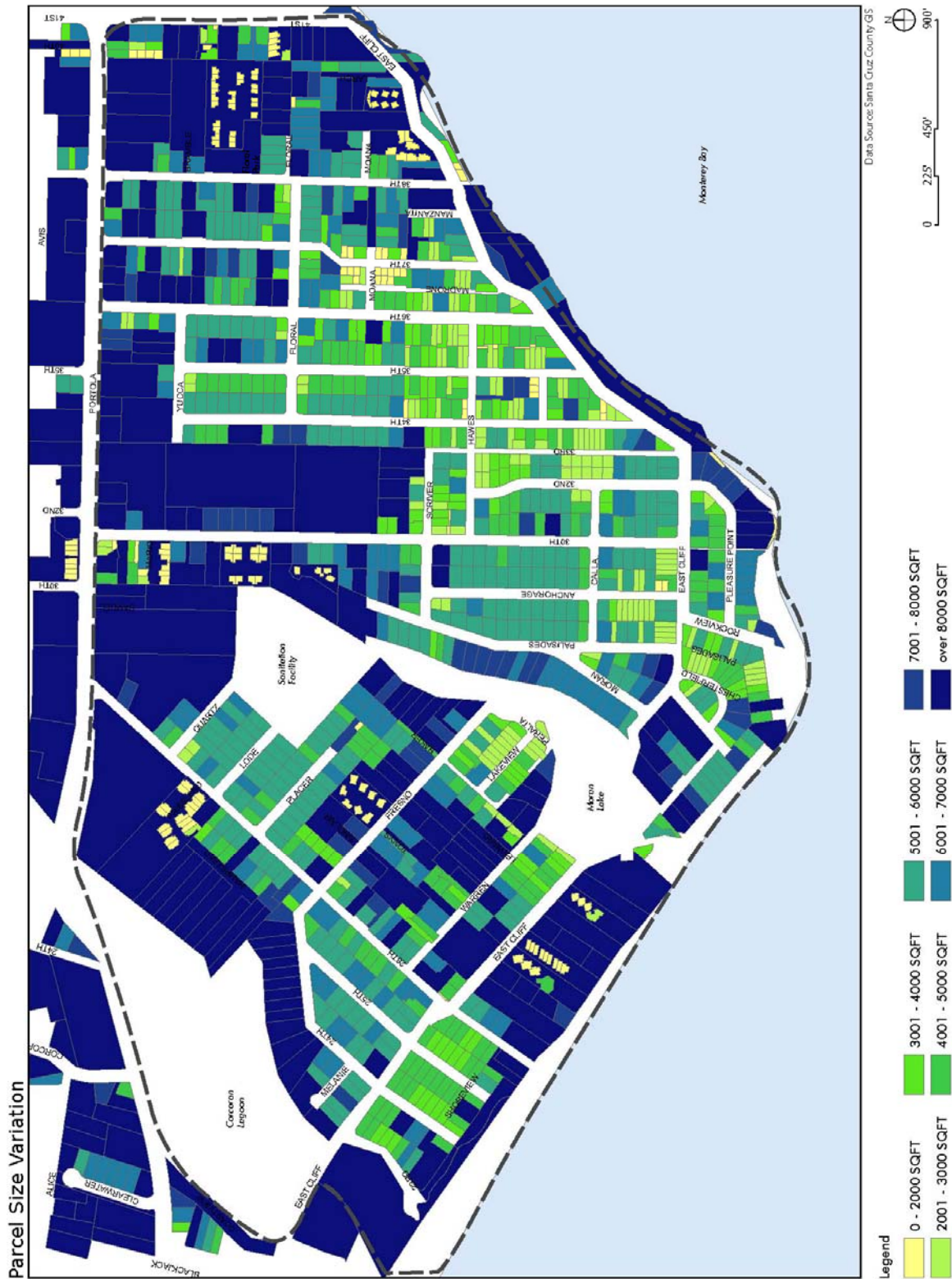
The wide range of lot size variation in Pleasure Point is an interesting and uncommon feature that has contributed significantly to the area’s distinctive character and wide variety of building footprints. (See diagram on page 27 showing the variety of building footprints). Most importantly, this range of lot sizes has resulted in a tremendous mix of housing types within Pleasure Point.

Variety of Parcel and Building Sizes











**Diverse Mix of Architectural Styles and Building Elements:** Though the prevalent design aesthetic in the neighborhood takes the form of small, one-story cottages (below), many variations of the cottage have been constructed (bottom). The one-story cottages are representative of Pleasure Point's distinctive housing. Most are constructed with a single pitched roof, porch and/or stoop and rarely are wider than 30 feet.

Variations of One Story Cottages



The houses below maintain the narrow width displayed in original cottages, but have added a second floor. Instead of porches, they use balconies to transition between the public and private realm.

Variations of Two Story Cottages



Over the years, the style of architecture has varied to include California bungalows, nautical designs, and Spanish colonial influences. This variety is not considered incompatible, but rather it is what gives Pleasure Point its distinct character. Pleasure Point is home to the classic beach house with wood siding and flat roofs (below left), some Spanish Colonial homes with stucco finish and clay roof tiles (below middle), and more modern designs incorporating a variety of materials and streamlined aesthetics (below right). Some of the newer houses that have drawn some criticism are larger, modern houses featuring an "Orange County subdivision" style, with ample stucco siding, that do not fit in well to the eclectic and funky nature of the Pleasure Point neighborhood.

Variations in Architectural Styles





**Architectural Elements and the Public Realm:** Pleasure Point's early bungalows included architectural elements that open onto the front yards and streets, thereby creating a transition between the public and private realms. These elements usually take the form as porches, decks and balconies. A collection of typical examples is shown below. The wide porch (below left) and generous deck (below right) are semi-private architectural features that add life to the front of homes and engage the public realm. They are usable spaces in scale with the dimensions of the houses.

Different Architectural Elements



**Variety of Building Materials:** A vast range of building materials is used on homes and fences throughout the neighborhood. The diversity provides texture and authenticity to the neighborhood. The best examples are homes treated with a combination of complimentary materials on their exposed elevations.

Different Building Materials



Wood Slats



Stucco and Shingles



Stucco, Stone Siding and Brick



Wood Siding and Shingles



Wood Siding, Shingles and Brick



Wood Siding and Shingles



Stucco and Wood Slats



Stucco, Clay Tiles, and Wrought Iron

**Variety of Site Treatment:** The setbacks, driveways and fencing within the neighborhood's parcels vary widely. On most blocks, it is hard to find two lots that are exactly alike. The rhythm of front setbacks and driveway widths is another element of the built environment that defines Pleasure Point's character.

**Variety of Landscaping:** In addition to the variety of architectural styles and site treatments throughout the neighborhood, Pleasure Point's abundant and varied landscaping adds character to individual lots and the streetscape as a whole. The size and massing of private landscaping provides transition between the scale of homes and the street, while concealing aging or unattractive structures. Any possible design guidelines or standards should not overlook the role landscaping plays in softening the built environment and defining the neighborhood. Many of Pleasure Point's established lots are lushly landscaped (below left and middle), providing privacy for residents and concealing building treatment. Front setbacks that maximize parking (below right), limit landscaping possibilities and appear stark in contrast.

Large trees are a defining element of the character of the area. Palm, cypress, eucalyptus, oak and other large trees play an integral part in giving Pleasure Point its natural, relaxed sense of place. Aside from the eucalyptus groves around Moran Lake, large trees in private yards are Pleasure Point's main source of urban forestry since there is no formal streetscape with street trees. Given the wide expanse of the beach and ocean, residential trees and large shrubs offer pedestrians shade and protection from the elements as well as a sense of enclosure on the street.

Owners of homes located within the Coastal Zone that seek to remove or trim more than one-third of the green foliage of a large trees on their property are subjected to the County's Significant Trees Protection Ordinance (Chapter 16.34 of the County Code). Residents who seek to remove or trim trees that fall within the parameters of the ordinance must obtain a Significant Tree Removal Permit from the County. Exceptions are made for emergency and disease-related situations.

#### Variety of Front Yard Landscaping Treatments





## Issues and Opportunities

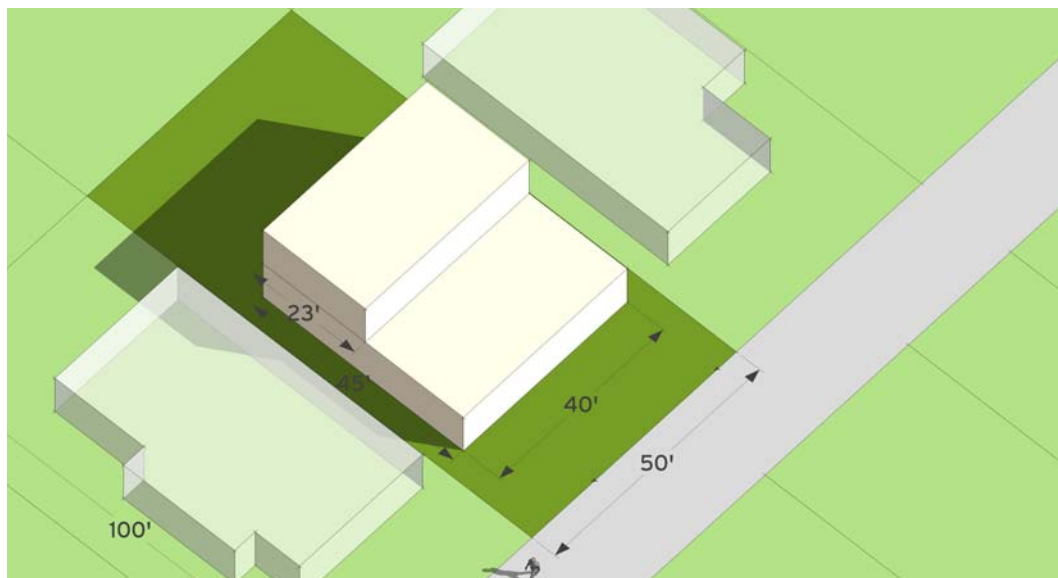
**Building Massing and Bulk:** The average American home size has increased greatly since the early days of Pleasure Point. The current average building permit that the County receives is for a 1,700-1,800 square foot house. Partly due to the prevalence of smaller lots, many or most of Pleasure Point's new homes have maximized lot coverage and appear oversized in comparison to their neighbors. Some examples are shown below. In the image below left, the size of the new home (background) more than doubles the existing neighboring cottage (foreground), though it has been designed to respond to the proportions of the cottage's roofline. The majority of the second floor of this modern home (below middle) does not step-back from the ground level, making the front façade appear larger than necessary. The two-story home (below right) does little to break its massing; the front façade has minimal articulation without step-backs.



Currently, the Pleasure Point neighborhood is regulated by the same development standards as the rest of the County, which may not work as well in the small parcel context of Pleasure Point. This has allowed the recent problematic trend (in the view of many community members) of overly massive/bulky newer houses replacing older, smaller scale houses. Some of the existing standards that should be reviewed to respect the unique character of the Pleasure Point neighborhood include:

- **Floor-Area Ratio (FAR):** The existing FAR standard is 0.5 (i.e., building floor area is allowed to be 50% of the parcel size, not including a 225 sq.ft. allowance for the garage) for all parcels zoned R-1 Single Family Residential (which is the case in most of Pleasure Point). Given Pleasure Point's wide range of lot sizes, abiding by the current FAR standards can result in disproportionately large second stories, relative to adjacent existing one-story cottages. This problem arises due to the prevalence of smaller, narrower lots and the need to build second stories to maximize the allowed floor area.

### 2-Stories Needed to Achieve Allowed Floor Area



- Setbacks: Existing ground and second-floor side setbacks are 5 or 8 feet (or 10' feet on one side of corner lots). There are no additional setback standards for upper stories (i.e., the second story must only be setback the same distance from the property line as the ground floor). As a result, flush, two-story side facades are allowed and are common (i.e., big, long, and tall walls built right up to the setback line), which can cast significant shadows and sometimes "loom" over smaller, adjacent houses.

Existing Side Setbacks – Same for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Stories

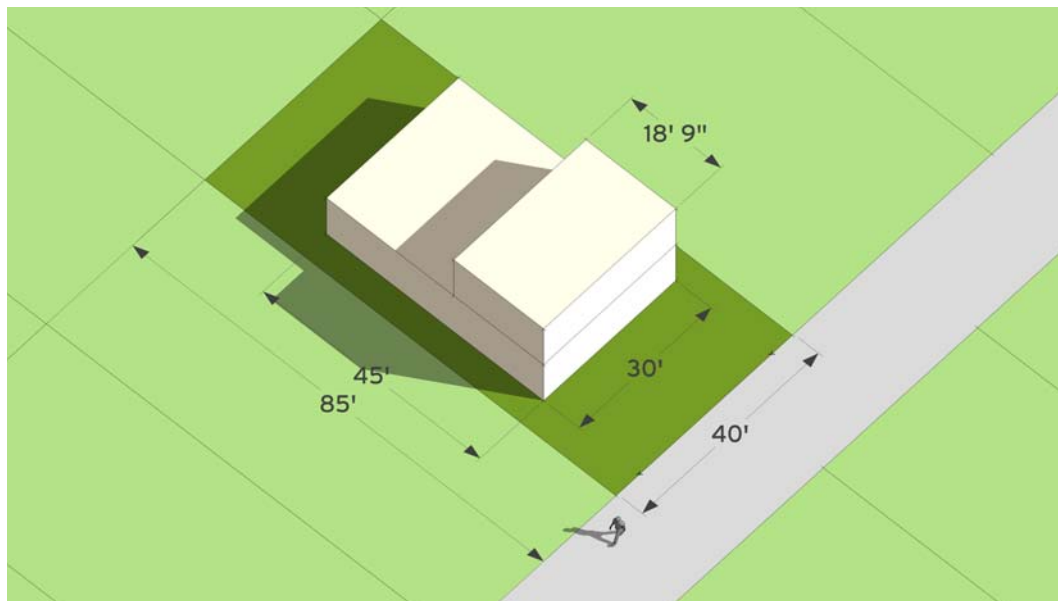


- **Lot Coverage:** The existing lot coverage standard is 40% for most lots. This is not a problem on medium or large size lots, however, on smaller lots (e.g., 3,500 sq. ft. or less) this limitation can force houses to build up (i.e., to add second stories) in order to gain sufficient floor area in the house. As a result, the overall mass and bulk of new buildings on medium-sized or larger lots (5,000 square feet or more) can be easily designed within the existing lot coverage standards and respect the existing built scale and character of Pleasure Point neighborhood. However, in order to maximize the FAR and stay within the existing lot coverage standards, new development on smaller lots typically results in bulky two story buildings.

Smaller 2<sup>nd</sup> Floors Possible on Large Lots (>5,000 sq.ft.)



Bulkier 2<sup>nd</sup> Floors Needed on Smaller Lots (<5,000 sq.ft.)





**Parking:** The existing building site standards require a typical single-family home (i.e., 2-4 bedrooms) to provide at least three off-street parking spaces, with one additional space for each additional bedroom. Though this requirement has the intention of relieving on-street parking constraints, it has resulted in driveways and garages that dominate the lots in front of new homes. Newly constructed homes often lack vegetation and/or ornamental landscaping, which can make them appear larger and more obtrusive than necessary. Additionally, there appears to be an increasing trend towards constructing high fencing that divides the public and private realms. As a result of all these factors, there is a predominance of newer homes with less engaging front yards. In a community as open as Pleasure Point, this change is noticeable and likely to shift perceptions of the sense of community.

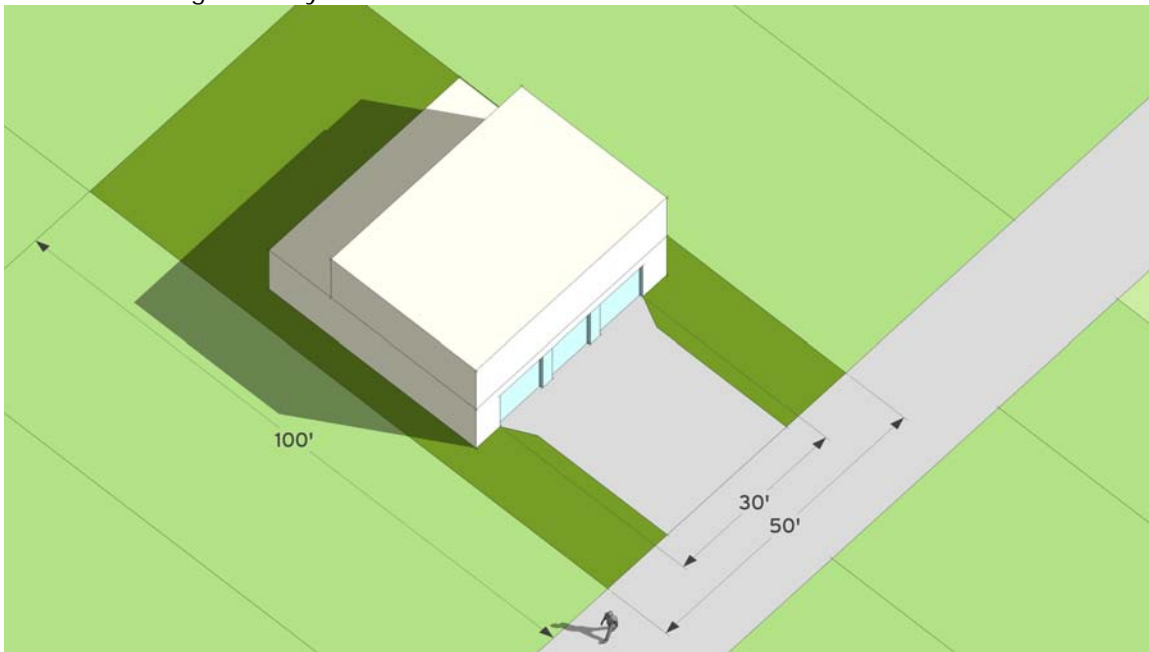
#### Variations of Parking



**Garage Location and Size:** Many redeveloped lots dedicate two-thirds or more of the front facades and yards to parking, in the form of driveways and garages. Some new homes use interesting materials and design elements to improve garages' and driveways' appearance (above right).

While there are standards for amount of parking and frontyard space dedicated to driveways and parking, there are no existing standards for garage location and the size of garage facade. As a result, many newer homes have front building facades dominated by two- or three-car garage openings. This auto-orientation of the house creates an unattractive, suburban atmosphere and breaks with the Pleasure Point tradition of a human-centered neighborhood design.

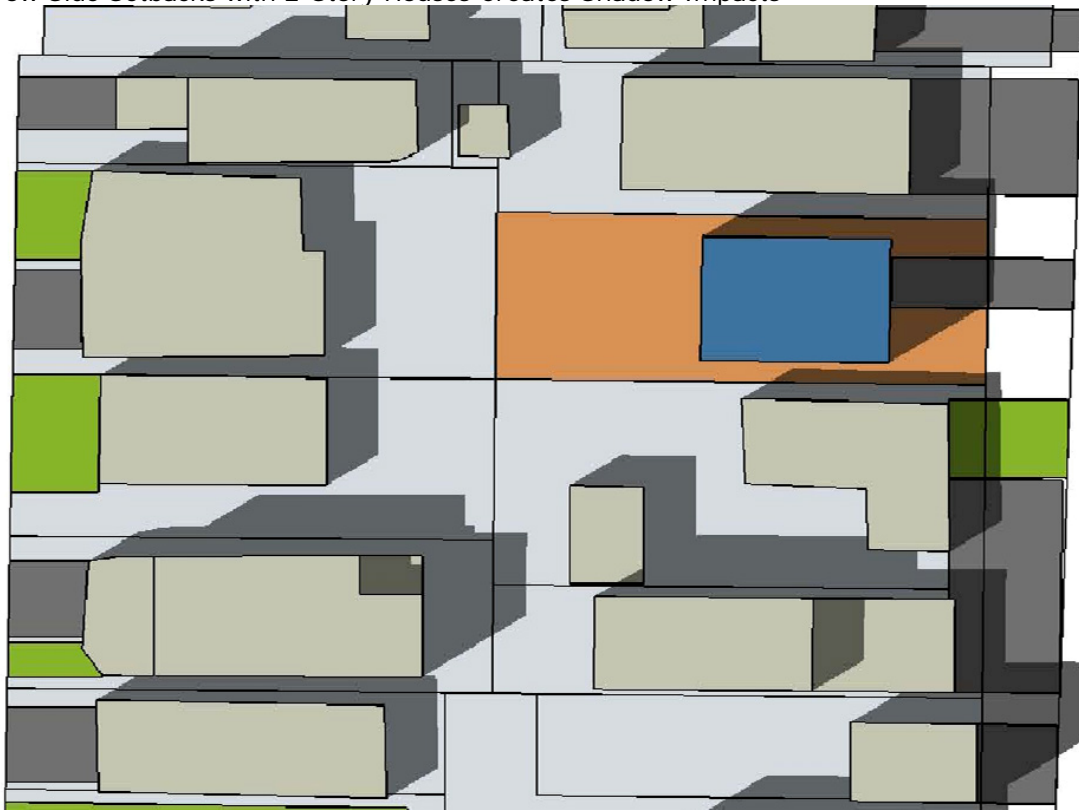
#### Three-Car Garages Overly Dominate Facade



**Sunlight Access:** With the area already built out and increasing home sizes, sufficient sunlight access is an important factor to consider in planning for future development and redevelopment in Pleasure Point. Due to the north-south orientation and larger lot sizes of the 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue neighborhood, most homes there receive adequate sunlight access either in the front or backyards. However, east of Moran Lake homes are sited in an east-west orientation. Furthermore, lot sizes are a great deal smaller resulting in tighter side setbacks. These two factors result in greater shade impacts to homes and yards, especially when there are large two-story houses on neighboring parcels.

The diagram below shows a typical section of Pleasure Point neighborhood east of Moran Lake where the homes are situated on an east-west grid and lot sizes are smaller. The diagram views the area from overhead and shows the shadows cast by an early afternoon sun. One can see from the diagram that the narrow side setbacks between houses and the east-west orientation of houses create multiple factors that block sunlight access.

Narrow Side Setbacks with 2-Story Houses Creates Shadow Impacts



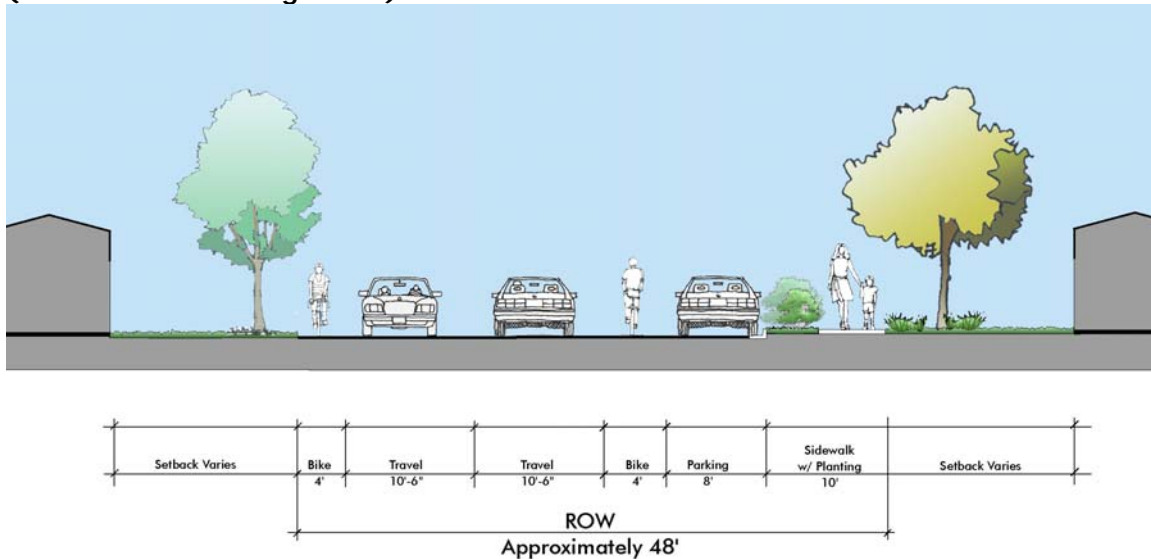
**Summary of Problem with Existing Development Standards:** Given Pleasure Point's wide range of lot sizes, abiding by the current Floor-Area Ratio (FAR), setback, and smaller parcel lot coverage standards (on smaller lots) can result in significantly disproportionate-scaled structures adjacent to smaller one-story cottages. There is general agreement among residents, County staff and local architects that the existing regulations are not easy to understand and do little to achieve the results initially intended. The challenge is to determine what measurements — including FAR, building envelope setbacks with possible differential upper-floor setbacks (or "step-backs"), and small parcel lot coverage standards — can be established or adjusted to allow property owners the freedom to build on their lots without being overly restricted, while protecting and reinforcing the existing neighborhood character. Recommended approaches for addressing these issues are presented in Chapter 4 of this document.

## TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Pleasure Point is comprised mostly of neighborhood-serving local county streets, with the exception of three major streets bordering the neighborhood: Portola Drive to the north, East Cliff Drive to the south, and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue on the east. A fourth major street, 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, serves as the main connection between Portola Drive and East Cliff Drive (see Diagram 6.1: Circulation Diagram). Aside from these major streets, the neighborhood's streets have narrow rights-of-way, limiting the number and width of travel lanes, parking lanes, sidewalks and pedestrian paths. The majority of the neighborhood-serving streets are not through-streets, thereby limiting their use by non-residents. This hierarchy of streets serves to buffer neighborhoods from external regional traffic. However, beach-going visitors affect the neighborhood's circulation and parking constraints on all streets in the summer months. Though the Live Oak Parking Program, which requires all vehicles to display parking permits on weekends and holidays between April 1 and Labor Day has been implemented for the last 25 years, the number of visitors seeking parking and traveling on the few through-streets between Portola Drive and East Cliff Drive results in congestion and safety concerns.

Pleasure Point streets can be categorized into three configuration types: Major Streets (or Arterials), Through-Streets (or Collectors) and Neighborhood-Serving (or Local) Streets. Major streets (see diagram below) are generally characterized by two striped travel lanes, dedicated bike lanes, and a curbed sidewalk with a landscape strip. These streets handle the most vehicular traffic as they serve as major connections into and out of Pleasure Point. Parking can be one side or both. Some streets have publicly-owned right of way (ROW) dimensions considerably wider than the existing street improvements (e.g., edge of pavement).

### TYPICAL MAJOR STREET CROSS SECTION (41<sup>ST</sup> Avenue Looking South)



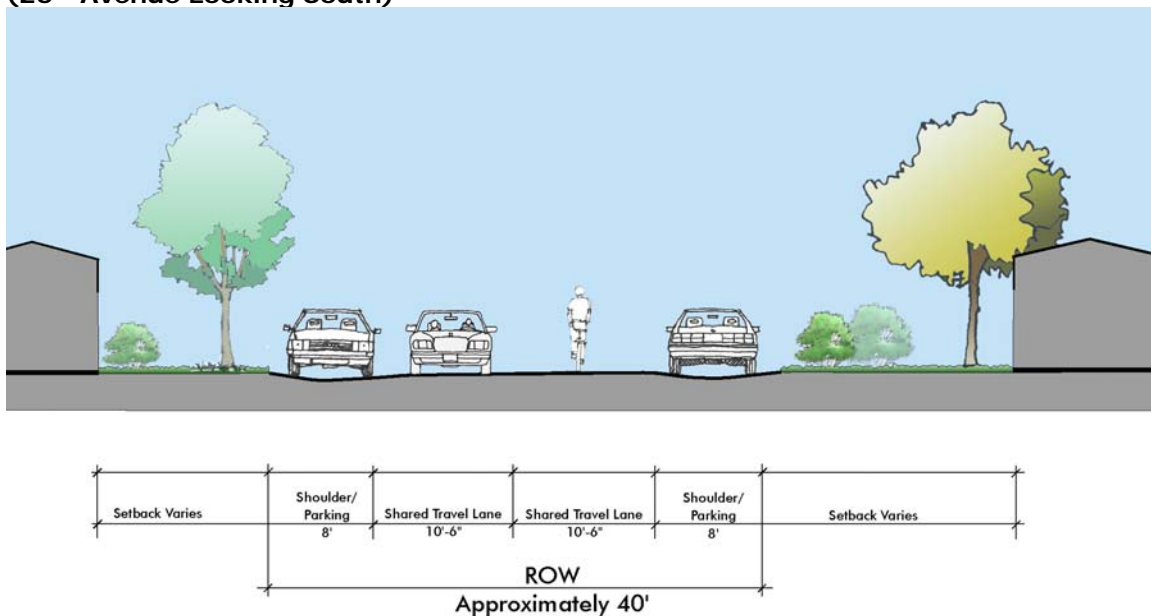
Major Streets include Portola Drive, East Cliff Drive, 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Three of the four major streets in the area have recently undergone improvements and appear to serve the community adequately. Along 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Portola Drive the County has invested in sidewalk improvements. Portola Drive has also had additional tree plantings in bulb-outs and improved pavement markings at the pedestrian crosswalks. As described in Chapter 2: Natural Systems, portions of East Cliff Drive suffered greatly after the heavy storms of January 1994. Areas of the roadway between 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Larch Lane were also affected. An approximately 10-12 feet wide and 50-foot long stretch of roadway was lost, but has since been rebuilt. The proposed East Cliff Drive Stabilization and Parkway Project, when built, will include a one-way eastbound travel lane (16 feet) from 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue.



A 16-foot pedestrian/bicycle path on the side of the roadway along the bluff will be separated from the travel lane by a continuous curb. Eight feet of the pedestrian/bicycle path will be asphalt, and the other eight feet will consist of decomposed granite. The new roadway will also feature an improved storm water treatment design with filtration units installed in the road as well as a reduced number of outfalls. In addition, a series of community meetings has resulted in a concept plan, to provide a pedestrian walkway along East Cliff Drive from 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Palisades, which has been approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

Through-streets (see diagram below) are characterized by approximately 40 feet of right-of-way and no sidewalks. Some are considered through-streets because they connect two major streets, extending from Portola Drive to East Cliff Drive. Bicyclists and pedestrians generally share the use of the street with vehicles. Shoulders on both sides of the street serve as on-street parking lanes.

**TYPICAL THROUGH STREET CROSS SECTION  
(26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Looking South)**

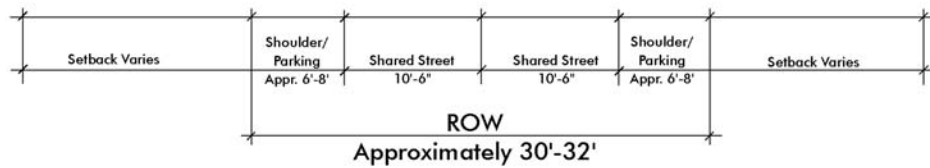
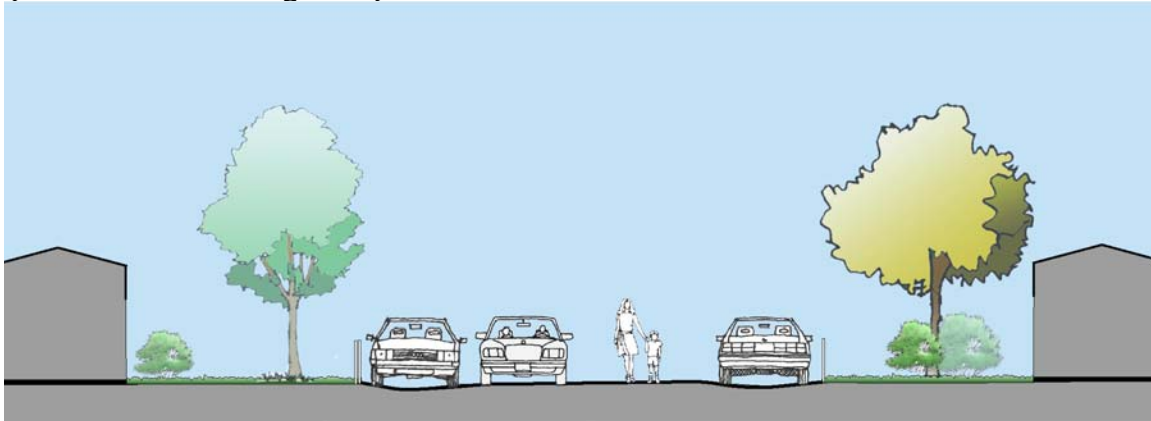


Part of the neighborhood beachfront character is defined by the neighborhood's lack of sidewalks. Most streets either accommodate a shoulder for pedestrian travel, adjacent to the parking lane, or pedestrians and bikes share the travel lane with vehicles. This configuration works on the slower streets that have limited vehicular travel, however it is not successful on many of the through-streets.

There are four through streets that extend from East Cliff Drive to Portola Drive: the main ones being 26<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Avenues, with 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Avenues being somewhat secondary. Among them, 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue appears to receive the most through traffic. Unfortunately the right-of-way along 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue is not sufficient to accommodate two-way travel, two on-street parking lanes, and sidewalks/pedestrian pathways (or bike lanes). As a result, the high traffic levels and speeds, conflicts with space for pedestrians and bicyclists, creating a safety hazard. Potential solutions to these user conflicts and infrastructure constraints are addressed in later chapters of this document.

Neighborhood-serving streets (see diagram below) are similar to through-streets but are approximately 10 feet narrower, generally unstriped and do not connect two major streets. With a tighter street width, lack of striping, and a predominantly east-west orientation that makes it difficult to travel fast and directly through Pleasure Point, these streets have a more intimate feel and more local-serving function. The neighborhood also contains several even smaller and narrower private streets and alleyways that sometimes provide access to the rear of lots

**TYPICAL NEIGHBORHOOD SERVING STREET CROSS SECTION  
(Floral Street Looking West)**



## Assets

**Intimate, Natural Street Character:** A non-typical network of streets without sidewalks and storm drains characterizes Pleasure Point. The lack of curb, gutters and sidewalks as well as the presence of unpaved shoulders on the side of the road gives Pleasure Point streets a more “natural” feel. The limited number of through-streets keeps the neighborhood compact and insulated.

Swing on Cypress Tree





**Shared Streets:** The lack of sidewalks on most streets in Pleasure Point is a testament to the pedestrian-friendly nature of the street network. The neighborhood-serving streets are shared spaces that many users use simultaneously, including pedestrians with dogs and/or strollers, bicyclists, kids playing and vehicles. The shared space makes good use of narrow rights-of-way and serves as the community's living room. The outdoor-oriented as well as beach- and surf-oriented lifestyles of many Pleasure Point residents make a walkable street network even more integral to livability of the area.

Lack of Sidewalks on Some Streets



**Traffic Calming Street Features:** Pleasure Point's pedestrian friendly streets are a result of several natural and social factors. The prominent location of Moran Lake in the center of the community prevents several streets from connecting through east and west. In addition to the dead-end nature of these streets cutting down less traffic on neighborhood-serving streets, many of Pleasure Point's east-west streets are narrower. The narrow widths and lack of pavement markings also serve to create a more pedestrian-oriented and less auto-dominated environment. Without a clear driving lane, drivers must pay more attention to the road. Wide bends in the road on 32nd and 37th Avenues also serve to slow and discourage automobile traffic through the neighborhood.

Curve at 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue



## Issues and Opportunities

**Limited Right-of-Way on Through-Streets:** Most through-streets present safety concerns between vehicular traffic and pedestrian/bike traffic. 26th Avenue (pictured below) serves as the only north-south connector linking East Cliff Drive and Portola Drive for autos, pedestrians and bikes in the 26th Avenue neighborhood. There is no space for pedestrians to walk other than in the travel lane. Possible ways to slow traffic and provide safe pedestrian pathways and connections are addressed in later chapters of this document.

Pedestrian Conflicts on 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue



**Opportunities to Improve Safe Pedestrian/Bike Connections Along Open Space:** Pedestrian and/or bike paths along the coast, Corcoran Lagoon and Moran Lake and Creek provide residents with safe connections between major streets and destinations, while increasing access to the natural landscapes. Efforts to improve and maintain can help relieve congestion on the neighborhood's streets.

**Inadequate Drainage:** In addition to circulation constraints, Pleasure Point's drainage infrastructure is of increasing importance as lots are being rebuilt. The area sits on top of semi-impervious clay and sediment layers which results in a high water table in the winter. This also contributes to standing water and local flooding in the winter months. Recent development has covered more land with impermeable surfaces, thereby increasing lot run-off onto the street. Although some of the area's previous drainage problems have been addressed, several streets still lack traditional storm drains. Many residents appreciate the natural look to Pleasure Point without a more typical suburban curb and gutter drainage system. However, residents are also concerned with the need for additional drainage treatment that is necessary to prevent water build-up and adequately treat storm water run-off.

Porous Drainage Treatment Helps to Infiltrate Runoff





**Shortage of On-Street Parking:** Efforts to provide more, or protect existing parking in the neighborhood have resulted in several ideas, including the possibility of having a shuttle service from distant visitor-serving parking lots. To date, no viable solutions have been developed and off-street public parking is limited to the parking lots at the Hook at the end of 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and at Moran Lake Park. Visitors can also park along most streets at any time, with restrictions in the permit parking area near the coast (i.e., permits needed from 11 am - 5 pm on weekends and holidays from April 1 to Labor Day). However, this system along with the practice of some home owners in Pleasure Point posting “No Parking” signs in the public Right-of-way in front of their homes, results in a reduction of public on-street parking. Currently, parking violations are a regular occurrence, especially during summer months, despite the Live Oak Parking Permit signage posted throughout the neighborhood.

#### Summer Weekend Parking Permits



**Prevalence of Overhead Utilities:** The location and prevalence of utility poles and electrical wires negatively impacts the views and aesthetics along narrow rights-of-way. Community members consider undergrounding the electrical wires to be a desirable option, especially on East Cliff Drive along the coast. While some believe that this would be the single most important thing that could be done to improve the neighborhood's appearance, the cost of doing so is quite prohibitive.

Overhead Utility Wires Near Moran Lake



**Lack of Pedestrian Links East and West:** Due to the prominent central location of Moran Lake, pedestrian links east and west of the study area are limited to the southern edge of the Lake and Portola Drive in the north. Investigation into additional pedestrian links across Moran Creek near the Lode Street Sanitation Facility might be useful for increasing pedestrian connectivity.