

# CHAPTER 2

## Relevant Plans and Guidelines

### 2.1 California Coastal Act

The Legislature declares that the basic goals of the state for the coastal zone are to:

1. Protect, maintain, and where feasible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the coastal zone environment and its natural and manmade resources;
2. Assure orderly, balanced utilization and conservation of coastal zone resources taking into account social and economic needs of the state;
3. Maximize public access to and along the coast and maximize public recreational opportunities in the coastal zone consistent with sound resource conservation principles and constitutionally protected rights of private owners;
4. Assure priority for coastal-dependent development over other development on the coast;
5. Encourage state and local initiatives and cooperation in preparing procedures to implement coordinated planning and development for mutually beneficial uses, including educational uses, in the coastal zone.

### 2.2 Del Mar Community Plan

The City of Del Mar Community (General Plan) establishes the community's vision for future growth through goals, objectives, and policies that address the following topics: environmental management, transportation infrastructure, and community development, including land use and housing (City of Del Mar, 1976). The Community Plan also references specific provisions for 16 specific plans that apply to certain areas of the city, natural or hazardous features, and provision of certain infrastructure.

**1.E.1 Preserve, as open space, areas such as the 100-year floodway and the beach bluffs west of the railroad tracks that are too hazardous to justify permanent construction.**

**1.E.7 Open space areas should be managed with erosion control and pollution prevention measures in the forefront.**

**1.H.1 Participate in regional and/or statewide efforts to evaluate and control beach and bluff erosion problems.**

**1.I.10 Maintain existing public uses of beaches.**

From the guiding principles above, the adaptation plan recognizes that Del Mar's beach,

particularly North Beach but also including South Beach along the bluffs, provide significant recreational, economic, and flood and erosion protection values. The beach is walkable for most of the year and most stages of the tide, with the exceptions being particularly high tides occurring in the winter when seasonal erosion of the beach has occurred (Figure 3). The intent of this guiding principle is to maintain these values and the character of Del Mar's beaches. Through adaptation, the goal is to avoid extended periods of time or successive years where these uses and values are significantly compromised (e.g., periods of days or weeks when the beach is not walkable or only walkable at the lowest tides). Given that the beach is continually changing throughout the year and from year to year, it is difficult to measure or specify a minimum beach width and this guiding principle is therefore focused on maintaining the beach's values.

**1.E.4 Preserve and where necessary acquire easements for the protection of access to the beach and other public open space.**

**2.A.5 Preserve and improve pedestrian access to and along beaches and sea cliffs by use of all public rights-of-way and prescriptive easements.**

As an extension of the guiding principles above, the City's adaptation goal is to maintain continuous horizontal coastal access along Del Mar's North and South Beach between Solana Beach to the north and Torrey Pines State Beach to the south. The Adaptation Plan also seeks to maintain and provide vertical access down to the Del Mar beach at existing access points and potentially new controlled and legal railroad crossing(s) and access down the South Bluff.

**1.J.1 Establish a comprehensive master plan and management program for the lagoon including biological productivity potential, health controls, future water supply, the preservation and enhancement of wildlife, and opportunities for educational and recreational enjoyment.**

**1.J.2 Land use policies established within the San Dieguito River Floodway and Lagoon Habitat should be consistent with the long-range goal of returning the entire area to the natural lagoon condition.**

In regard to the above Del Mar Community Plan goal, the Adaptation Plan seeks to maintain San Dieguito wetland habitat functions for wetlands within the City limits and to provide guidance and coordination for maintaining the Lagoon ecosystem as a whole, including upstream wetlands in the City of San Diego. The Del Mar Coastal Hazards, Vulnerability, and Risk Assessment (ESA 2016) indicates that vegetated salt marsh habitat will convert to unvegetated mudflat and open water habitat with sea-level rise. The Adaptation Plan seeks to maintain a diverse array of wetland habitats including vegetated salt marsh habitat for critical salt marsh species, which could otherwise be lost. Southern California Edison (SCE) currently maintains the San Dieguito Lagoon Restoration as part of the mitigation program for the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS); however, SCE is not currently required to address the potential effects of sea-level rise and at some point in the future the management of the restoration may be transferred to another entity. The Adaptation Plan therefore seeks to improve the resiliency of the entire San Dieguito Lagoon wetland ecosystem to sea-level rise,

including the San Dieguito Lagoon Restoration.

## 2.3 Del Mar Local Coastal Program

Del Mar's (LCP guides development and protects coastal resources within the Coastal Zone. LCPs must be consistent with the California Coastal Act of 1976, as amended. Del Mar's LCP is made up of two parts: the Land Use Plan (a compilation of goals, policies, and recommended programs) and Implementing Ordinances (regulations that implement the provisions of the Land Use Plan and the California Coastal Act) (City of Del Mar, 1993; 2001).

Del Mar's LCP establishes goals, policies, and regulations for the following four overlays: beach overlay, coastal bluff overlay, floodplain overlay, bluff, and lagoon overlay.

The Beach Protection Initiative (BPI) was adopted on April 12, 1988 by the Del Mar voters. It was subsequently codified in the Del Mar Municipal Code (DMMC) LCP as the Beach Overlay Zone at chapter 30.50. On November 14, 1988 the City Council, as authorized by the BPI, adopted Guidelines to interpret the BPI. The key provisions and details of the BPI and its implementation as chapter 30.50 are included in Chapter 10.

Key policies are the following:

- **Beach Overlay Zone (Land Use Plan, Chapter III; Implementing Ordinances, Chapter 30.50):** The purpose of this zone is to protect public access to and along the shoreline, while promoting public safety, health and welfare, and providing for the protection of private properties. The zone establishes a shoreline protection area (SPA) line within the Beach Overlay Zone.
- **Coastal Bluff Overlay Zone (Land Use Plan, Chapter III; Implementing Ordinances, Chapter 30.55):** The purpose of this zone is to protect Del Mar's fragile coastal bluffs as a visual resource and avoid the risks to life and property associated with bluff failure and shoreline erosion.
- **Floodplain Overlay Zone (Land Use Plan, Chapter III, Implementing Ordinances, Chapter 30.56):** The purpose of this zone is to promote public health, safety, and general welfare by ensuring that new development is appropriately sited and constructed so as to avoid hazards to those who will occupy the development, and to avoid damage or hazards to the surrounding area. The purpose is also to ensure development will not obstruct flood flow; will be designed to reduce the need for construction of flood control facilities that would be required if unregulated development were to occur; and to minimize the cost of flood insurance to Del Mar's residents.
- **Lagoon Overlay Zone (Land Use Plan, Chapter VI; Implementing Ordinances, Chapter 30.53):** The purpose of this zone is to protect the wetland resources of the Los Peñasquitos and San Dieguito Lagoons and their sensitive upland habitats by requiring that all development activities are designed and implemented in a manner that is consistent with wetland habitat protection and enhancement

## 2.4 Del Mar Climate Action Plan

The Del Mar Climate Action Plan provides a roadmap for the Del Mar community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Action Plan includes a greenhouse gas emission inventory for 2012 (defined as the baseline) and emission reduction targets for 2020 and 2035. Actions to meet emission reduction targets are grouped by the following community sectors: energy and buildings, water and waste, transportation, and urban tree planting. The Climate Action Plan identifies the process for implementing and monitoring success of the reduction measures included in the plan. Adaptation strategies to help the city reduce vulnerabilities and build resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change are also included. Adaptation strategies that relate to the measures identified in this Adaptation Plan include:

- Coastal Flooding
  - Conduct a sea-level rise study to understand the risks and cost/benefits of development within flood hazard zones and potential long term mitigation recommendations.
  - Explore protecting existing and construct new natural buffers to protect the coastline from flooding.
  - Explore preservation of shorelines through beach replenishment and nourishment to address impacts of sea-level rise on shorelines.
- Natural Systems and Wildlife
  - Monitor the health of coastal wetlands/river habitats that filter polluted runoff.
  - Protect, preserve, and restore native habitats.

## 2.5 CCC Sea-Level Rise Policy Guidance

In 2015 the CCC adopted the Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance document to aid jurisdictions in incorporating sea level rise into LCPs, Coastal Development Permits, and regional strategies. The document outlines specific issues that policymakers and developers may face as a result of sea level rise, such as extreme events, challenges to public access, vulnerability and environmental justice issues, and consistency with the California Coastal Act. It organizes current science, technical, and other information and practices into a single resource to facilitate implementation of the Coastal Act by coastal managers at the state and local level. The policy guidance document also lays out the recommended planning steps to incorporate sea level rise into the legal context and planning strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and guide adaptation planning. The policy guidance has a strong emphasis on using soft or green adaptation strategies.