

## Consensus – Definition and Levels of Agreement

### Definition:

Consensus is a process used to find the highest level of agreement without dividing the participants into factions. Consensus means that everyone in the group supports, agrees to, or can accept a particular decision and in the end, everyone can say "Even though I may not prefer this decision above all others, I will support the decision because it was reached fairly and openly and I trust the wisdom of the group."

### Levels of Agreement:

The preferred decision-making process is collaborative problem-solving. In seeking consensus on the various policy components of the draft Local Coastal Land Use Plan and General Plan Elements, it is understood that GPAC members will voice their concerns along the way; rather than waiting until a final recommendation has been developed. Dissenting opinions should not come as surprises at the end of a discussion or voting process.

Staff recommends that GPAC utilize a scale representing "levels of agreement." The following is an example with five levels. A member could register their degree of approval and support for the whole or specific aspects of the draft policies, using such a scale to express the degree of overall GPAC consensus:

**Level 1** - I think this proposal is the best choice of the options available to us.

**Level 2** - I am enthusiastic about the group's proposal and am confident it expresses the best wisdom of the group.

**Level 3** - I may not be especially enthusiastic about it, but I can accept the group's proposal.

**Level 4** - I feel we have no clear sense of agreement among the group. We need to talk more before considering a decision.

**Level 5** - I do not agree with the group's proposal. I feel the need to block its adoption and propose an alternative.

The goal is for all members to be in the upper levels of agreement. The GPAC would be considered to have reached consensus if all members are at levels 1, 2, or 3. If any member is at level 4 or 5, the GPAC will stop and evaluate how best to proceed. Sometimes full consensus will not be obtainable. Pursuant to the GPAC's "Mission Statement and Principles of Participation" statement, in the case of non-consensus, alternative perspectives will be documented.

One approach to implementing this type of system utilizes green, yellow and red cards. Green represents levels 1 and 2, yellow is equivalent to level 3, and red covers levels 4 and 5. Using colored cards during discussions, each member would indicate one of the three levels providing an immediate and straight forward indication of the group's status on a particular topic.

## Noise Element - First Public Draft

**Soundwalls:** How should they be addressed in policy? Three draft policies suggest approaches, excerpted below:

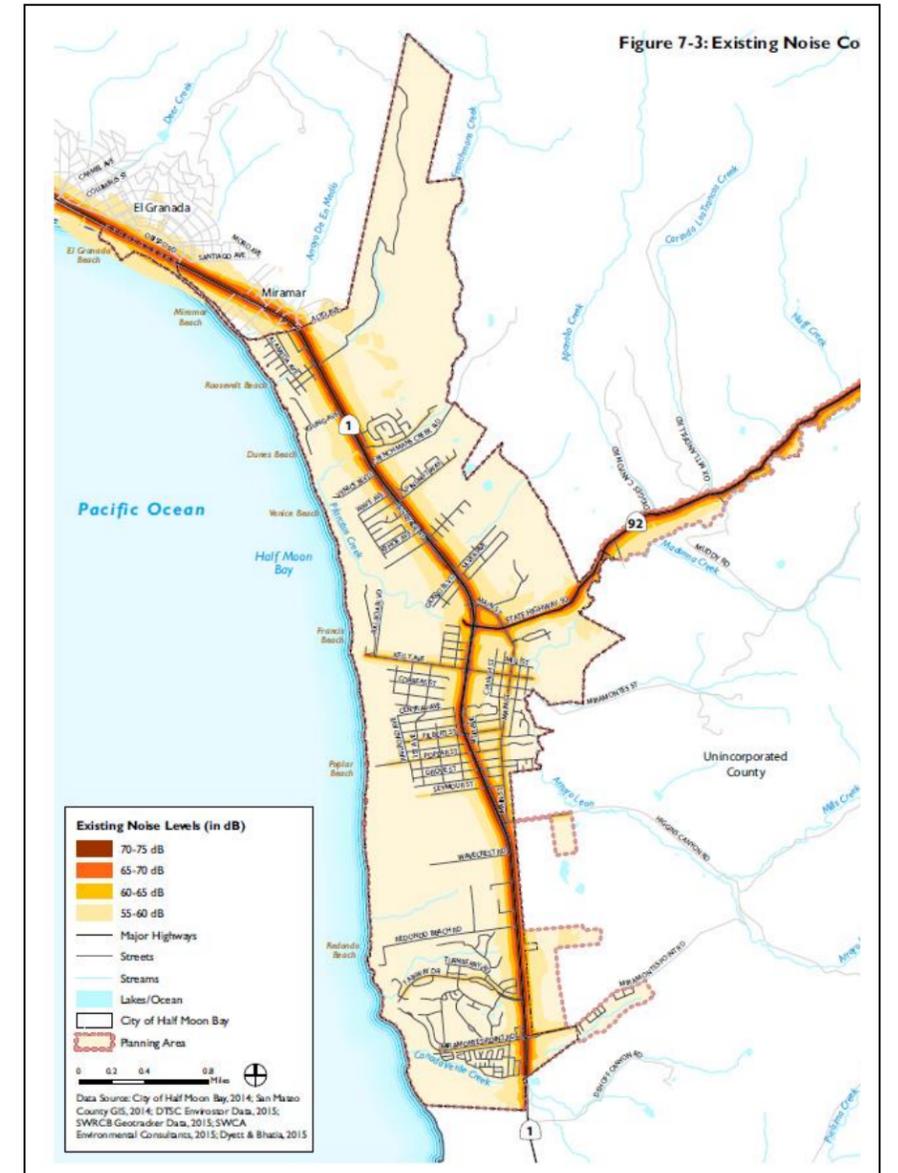
### 7-I.4 Exterior Noise Levels for Sensitive Uses.

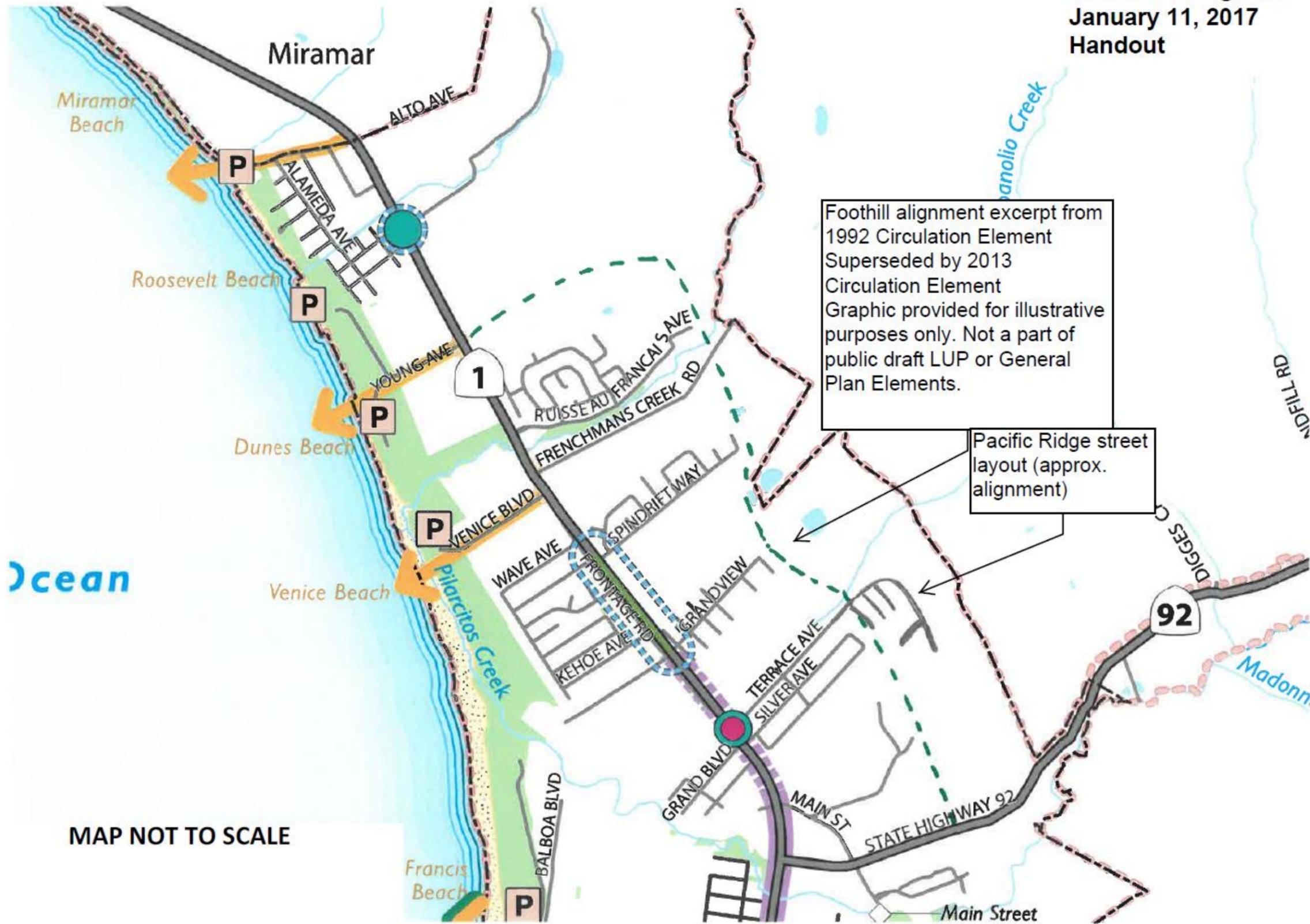
Establish the City's exterior noise level objective for residences, hotels, motels, residential care facilities, child care facilities, and hospitals as 60 dBA CNEL or less... While the City will evaluate and seek to limit exterior exposure, the City will maintain flexibility to make appropriate decisions on a project-by-project basis rather than applying an absolute standard to all projects. The residential component of mixed-use development in the Downtown core area is exempt from this exterior noise level standard.

*As an example, noise attenuation for a single-family residence may be focused on the rear yard or on a patio area to avoid or minimize the use of tall sound walls along Highway 1 or SR 92. Site planning and building orientation for sensitive uses in noise impacted areas should consider utilizing the proposed new structure(s) for sound attenuation of outside space. Noise attenuation measures between abutting land uses could include sound walls along interior property lines. (See page 7-15)*

**7-I.11 Transportation Noise.** Monitor and coordinate with Caltrans and SamTrans and seek mitigation of transportation-related noise impacts on noise-sensitive uses. Require, where necessary and feasible, the inclusion of noise attenuation measures such as quieter pavement surfaces in the design of new roadway projects in Half Moon Bay. *The design of noise mitigation measures for roadways should take into consideration the need to preserve view corridors, viewsheds, and the highway's scenic character. Tall sound walls may not be appropriate for Highway 1 or SR 92. Potential noise attenuation measures may include earthen berms where feasible, and insulation of the structures and uses impacted by the roadway noise. (See page 7-17)*

**7-I.13 Roadway Noise Attenuation Methods.** Minimize the use of sound walls for noise attenuation along Highways 1 and 92. Instead, encourage the use of siting and design techniques such as using structures to shield noise-sensitive areas. If a sound wall is determined to be the best solution to reduce excessive noise in a given situation, it shall be of high-quality design and materials so as to be aesthetically compatible. (See page 7-17)





Foothill alignment excerpt from 1992 Circulation Element Superseded by 2013 Circulation Element Graphic provided for illustrative purposes only. Not a part of public draft LUP or General Plan Elements.

Pacific Ridge street layout (approx. alignment)

MAP NOT TO SCALE