



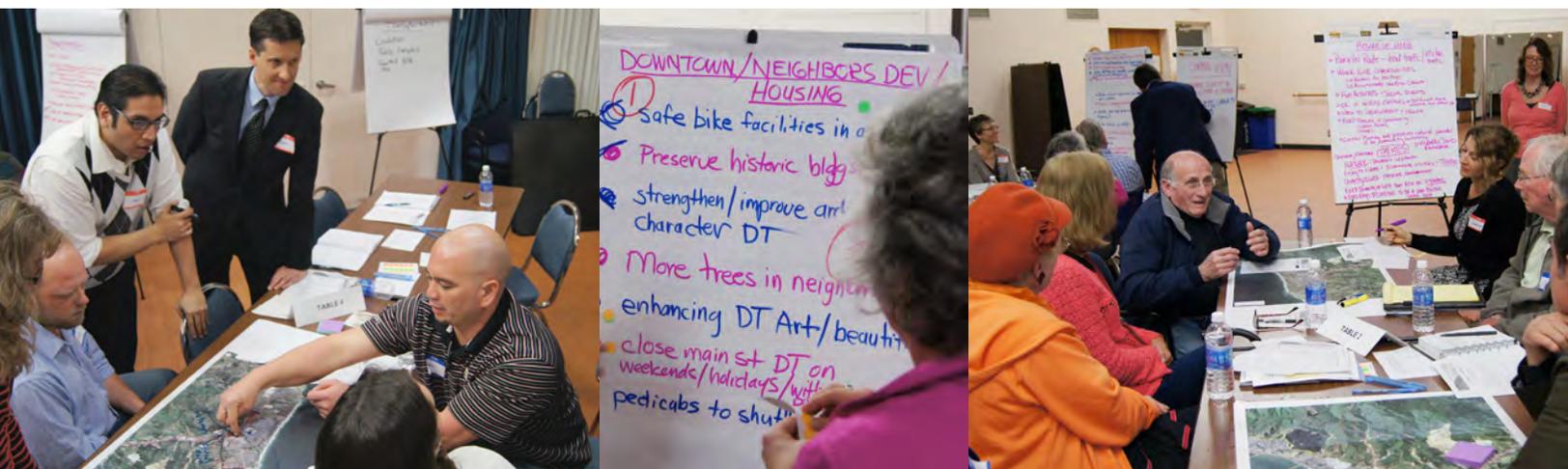
Draft Guiding Principles

Half Moon Bay: Planning for the Future

Perched against the backdrop of the Pacific Coast, open bluffs, and forested hills, Half Moon Bay has one of the most scenic settings in the Bay Area. The oldest town in San Mateo County, Half Moon Bay has an historic downtown and unique agricultural heritage. Combined with the welcoming and community-oriented nature of its residents, it is easy to see what makes Half Moon Bay such a great place to live, work, and play.

The General Plan is the City’s primary tool for guiding future development. Each day the City must make decisions about growth, services, and where and how to focus resources. The General Plan provides the guidance for those decisions by setting out long-term goals for the city’s future, policies to guide day-to-day decisions, and implementing programs to achieve the vision. Half Moon Bay is also the only city in the Bay Area entirely within the California Coastal Zone, and thus has a California Coastal Commission approved Local Coastal Program (LCP) that also regulates development in the city. The current General Plan and the LCP date back to the early 1990s, so it is important to ensure that these critical planning documents remain consistent with the community’s goals and values. Where they are not, the General Plan and LCP need to be updated and changed.

In fall 2013, the City of Half Moon Bay initiated an exciting, collaborative process—PlanHMB—to update the city’s General Plan and the LCP. One of the early steps in this process was the development of guiding principles that reflect the community’s aspirations for the city’s future that help guide development of detailed planning proposals. The PlanHMB Guiding Principles that follow have been shaped by public input through a citywide mail-in survey, “community conversations,” stakeholder interviews, a community workshop and other focused meetings, and ideas generated by General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) brainstorming.



1

Maintain Half Moon Bay's small-town character and quality of life, and strengthen community connections through activities and improved public gathering places.



During community outreach, residents repeatedly mentioned the small-town feel of Half Moon Bay, as well as the close-knit, friendly, and engaged community. The small-town feel was discussed in connection to the physical aspects of the town: Main Street, the small shops and old buildings, and that the town is quaint, rustic, and traditional. It was also discussed in reference to the Half Moon Bay community; participants mentioned that everyone knows everyone, and that people care about one another and the town itself. Many said they liked the calm and safety of the town, and noted that it is family-friendly and a good place to raise children.

Looking ahead, community members desire a path of careful and orderly growth that builds on the unique assets of Half Moon Bay, and maintains its small-town character and cohesive community feel. From a physical development perspective this means ensuring that development is appropriately scaled and in harmony with the small-scaled, low-rise, and fine-grained development pattern of the community; maintaining a reasonable pace of growth; and preserving the city's historic building stock, compact urban form, and surrounding farmland.

Community connections will be enhanced through more public gathering places, including perhaps a “central” or “great” park for residents and visitors, and amenities and recreation for all, especially families and children; family-friendly activities and more events that connect residents to one another and foster community pride; a larger library; and greater community engagement and involvement in City activities.



2

Enhance the city's scenic visual quality and coastal landscape setting, and ensure protection of environmental and surrounding agricultural resources through conservation and sustainable development.

Half Moon Bay's natural features—such as the ocean, weather, and open spaces—and its coastside scenic beauty are the city's defining attributes, and principal draws for residents and visitors. “Feeling of openness,” “nature,” “the ocean and beaches,” “bike and running paths,” and “relaxed atmosphere” are some of the words used by community members to describe the desirable characteristics of the city's setting.

Half Moon Bay's location endows it with a rich array of natural resources that provide habitat for wildlife, opportunities for recreation, and aesthetic value. Surrounding farmland enhances the city's freestanding identity and provides connections to the city's agrarian heritage, as well as access to fresh local produce.

“Preserving environmental resources and open space” was the top choice among planning actions for the future in the community survey. The General Plan will reflect the City's continued commitment to open space protection, strategic acquisitions or partnerships with other agencies to further the city's open space system, and development patterns that enhance natural resources (such as waterways and habitats) and overall environmental quality. Actions to pursue include maintaining a compact development form, promoting sustainable or low-impact development practices such as green building, and planning for coastline preservation and climate change adaptation. While most of the farmland surrounding Half Moon Bay is outside city limits, Half Moon Bay will work with others to ensure the continued viability of surrounding agriculture and floriculture through supportive actions such as accommodating housing needs of workers and enhancing linkages between farming and tourism.



3

Foster a complete and balanced community, with enhanced local commercial options, business incubation and growth, and diverse residential opportunities.

Half Moon Bay's remote setting, location in the Coastal Zone, and presence of natural resources that are its draws are also constraints to development of a balanced community, with a greater number of jobs and a broader array of commercial amenities. Most residents hold jobs in San Francisco, the inner Peninsula, and other distant locations, and must drive long distances for everyday shopping needs as the city's population is too small to draw larger or specialized retailers. Lack of office space and access to talent pool has limited the city's ability to retain growing locally-incubated businesses like Go Pro.

While Half Moon Bay will likely remain a bedroom community for the foreseeable future, the General Plan can help nurture businesses by identifying development sites in appropriate settings for commercial uses; continuing to emphasize tourism development; promoting a greater array of retail uses that capitalize on Midcoast strengths; and linking retail, restaurant, and entertainment development to tourism and recreation. In the future, Half Moon Bay will be a more inclusive community by promoting diverse housing types to accommodate a range of incomes, ages, and lifestyles, including non-traditional households and those looking for housing in walkable settings close to downtown. The General Plan will streamline the development process by providing greater certainty for uses and limiting or eliminating Planned Development (PD) zoning, integrating coastal planning with the City's processes, and establishing zoning regulations that ensure standards appropriate to Half Moon Bay's character and contemporary needs.



Promote pedestrian, bicycle, and transit mobility; increased connectivity between the city's neighborhoods; and enhanced coastal and open space access.

Transportation is a key concern of community members. The regional access routes—highways 1 and 92—back up during commute hours and are gridlocked during events such as the Pumpkin Festival. Compounding the issue is a lack of local connections between the different parts of the city, forcing people to get in cars and on the highways even for short intra-city trips.

The community desires better connectivity through a more developed and integrated transportation system, with more pedestrian connections, bicycle trails and paths, transit options, and parallel routes to Highway 1. Specifically, the General Plan will promote: An enhanced and fully connected system of sidewalks, paths, bike lanes, and trails; convenient pedestrian connections from every neighborhood to help youth travel safely to schools and parks; and safer crossings of Highway 1 for pedestrians and bicyclists. A strong linkage between land use and transportation (for example, between schools and planned bikeways) will be essential. The General Plan will help realize the community's long-sought goal of a route parallel to Highway 1 together with potentially a widened highway, and new connections between neighborhoods where feasible.

The City and businesses will facilitate biking for routine activities such as going to work, school, shopping, or going to a restaurant to eat by providing bike parking. The City will work with transit providers and adjacent jurisdictions on enhanced transit; better direct connections to BART/Caltrain and Peninsula destinations such as Stanford; and potentially a shuttle during major events and summer. The General Plan and the Local Coastal Program will also thoroughly address coastal access through better trail connections and physical access points, parking and transportation demand management strategies, multi-modal access, integration of local and regional trail planning efforts, and signage to direct visitors.

4



5

Encourage Downtown vitality with a more diverse array of uses and amenities.

Half Moon Bay stands out for the strength of its historic Downtown centered on Main Street, which, in combination with the coastal setting, attracts visitors from the entire Bay Area region. “Promote downtown vitality” was the second-most supported planning action in the community survey for the General Plan, and is integral to promoting the city’s identity.

Community members appreciate Main Street’s charm and quaintness; revitalizing Downtown will help enhance its draw and appeal. New stores and restaurants that cater to residents and stay open late, cultural and art activities that draw people from afar, and an increased resident population base will infuse the Downtown with vitality that will also draw new businesses— including ones that cater to local needs. Nighttime and entertainment uses, including a movie theater, will provide additional energy and vitality. Downtown will also provide opportunities for aging Half Moon Bay residents to live within walking access to services and amenities, and serve as an attractive location for younger residents. Downtown will accommodate new activities and buildings while still maintaining its small-town feel, charm, and respect for historical resources.

Revitalization would require collaboration between the City, property owners, and merchants. The General Plan can help by designating additional sites for restaurants, stores, and other amenities; promoting a more diverse array of uses, including residential and mixed-use development in focused locations; extending the active portion of Main Street to Highway 92 and enhancing its visibility from the two highways; and ensuring adequate and convenient short-duration parking availability for shoppers and diners.



6

Promote visitation and the city's development as a hub for the Midcoast. Gracefully accommodate tourism, balancing it with local needs and the community's character.

Half Moon Bay is the most visited coastal destination in the Bay Area. Tourism is the leading local economic engine, and accommodations and food service is the top sector for employment. Despite events like the Pumpkin Festival, the Mavericks Invitational surf competition, and the Dream Machines show that lead to a visitor surge, tourism remains underdeveloped along the San Mateo coast.

Many of the resources that make the city attractive to visitors also enhance the community's quality of life: beaches, outdoor activities, shopping and dining, arts and culture, and events. Half Moon Bay will take advantage of potential for tourism growth, accommodating it gracefully with the community's built environment and natural setting. The City will promote development of at least one additional hotel, more year-round visitation, and, in partnership with others, promote Half Moon Bay as a weekday destination for meetings and events. Strategies will capitalize on the city's heritage and unique local assets—such as farming, open space, and the arts—in promoting resources and activities such as a culinary academy, farm-to-table themed events, opportunities for outdoor recreation, and development of Half Moon Bay as the Midcoast arts center. A signage program will be undertaken to direct visitors, and better walking connections between Downtown and the ocean will be emphasized.



Next Steps

These are intended to remain as “draft” until the Preferred Plan and the General Plan policies are developed, and will be finalized and included in the General Plan.

Ongoing Community Participation

Ongoing community participation is essential as alternative strategies and trade-offs are evaluated and policies to accomplish the Draft Guiding Principles are developed. Please continue to visit the website www.planhmb.org for news and further participation and feedback opportunities.



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