

*A creek runs through it...*

# A Vision for the Oceanside Boulevard Corridor

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FINAL REPORT AS ACCEPTED BY THE  
OCEANSIDE CITY COUNCIL, NOVEMBER 13, 2007

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WITH LOGISTIC ASSISTANCE FROM  
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[www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/obv](http://www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/obv)

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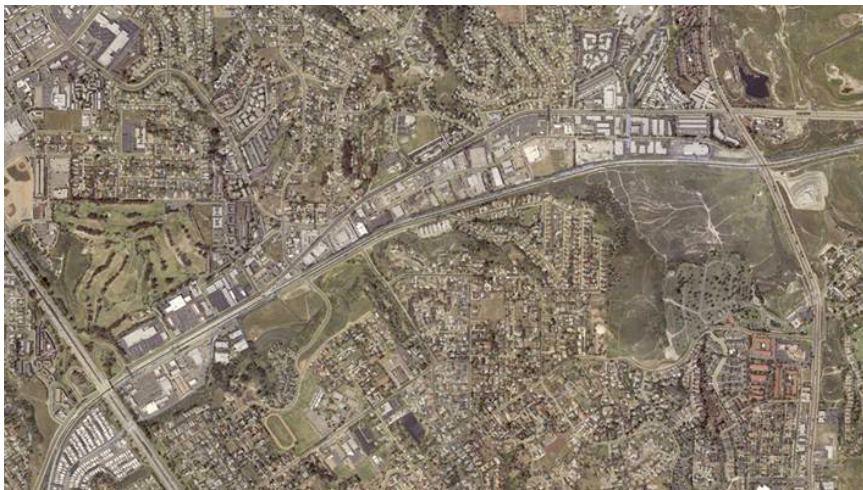
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# 1. Introduction

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The area targeted for the visioning effort included the Oceanside Boulevard corridor between Interstate I-5 and El Camino Real. No specific boundaries were set north and south of the Boulevard.

The impetus to develop a vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor came at the February 21, 2007 meeting of the Oceanside City Council. Council directed staff to initiate a Vision/Master planning effort for the area of the Boulevard bound by I-5 and El Camino Real. Council also directed that the vision be staff driven and that it should include community input. Subsequently, the Council appointed a 15-member Task Force, representing a broad range of interests in the community, to shape the six-month effort.

The Task Force met nine times from April to mid-November 2007, carefully stewarding ideas collected from the public into a bold and implementable vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor. Their work included developing principles, a Vision Statement, and policy steps for the corridor while helping facilitate the two public workshops. They were also instrumental in selecting images from communities throughout the nation to illustrate principles and to show desirable features envisioned for the corridor. This report summarizes the steps and outcomes that have led to the development of a vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor.

## 2. The Making of the Vision

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The vision process for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor utilized a carefully crafted process to integrate input from staff, the Task Force, and the public and to ensure that their voices were faithfully represented in the resulting vision.

### **What is a Vision?**

A vision is a process designed to elicit extensive public input on issues related to planning and development. For over 30 years communities throughout the nation have undertaken visioning efforts as a way to engage local residents and community stakeholders in physical planning. Visions have helped create better, more implementable plans. They have succeeded in bringing community members together to collaborate, identify common values and principles, and engage in transformative initiatives to improve their towns, cities, and regions. The outcome of a vision is a set of principles that reflect the values expressed by the community as well as policy steps and recommendations designed to further the vision's implementation.

## **Visions, Plans, and Regulations**

The vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor is the first step in a larger process that will include developing a Master Plan and establishing a new set of development regulations for the Boulevard. The vision, Master Plan, and regulations have different outcomes and require different methods to be implemented.

The vision determines what the community deeply wants (its values) expressed in the form of principles, general policy steps, and images that show desired outcomes. The development of a vision is an inductive process that uses the Task Force's and the public's specific knowledge of the community and of conditions along the Boulevard corridor to imagine how the Boulevard corridor can be transformed in the future.

The Master Plan articulates the values and principles expressed by the vision into goals, strategies, and a detailed physical plan. The development of a Master Plan is based on extensive research and analysis of conditions (demographic, economic, and physical character) and an understanding of future trends. The Master Plan is a legal document adopted by City Council that will guide policy decisions along the Boulevard corridor.

The regulations will determine how the Master Plan will be implemented by establishing detailed controls on building form while de-emphasizing control over uses. Regulations are also a legal document. They will provide the tools to guide new development and redevelopment, ensuring that the character of place suggested by the vision is sustained over time.

## **Process Steps**

The process of developing a vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor consisted of several steps, with each step providing content to inform the next one. These steps are described in the following pages.

## Site Visit

City of Oceanside staff organized a tour of the Oceanside Boulevard corridor that brought together the Task Force, consultants, and members of the public. The tour was designed to highlight several physical conditions along the Boulevard corridor. It was conducted by bus with several stops along the way to give participants an opportunity to walk, hear summary presentations by staff, and engage in a dialogue with staff and consultants.

The tour included the Loma Alta Creek, residential neighborhoods to the north and to the south, multi-family housing, industrial areas, offices, and the newly built Sprinter stations.

Touring and walking the Boulevard corridor gave the participants an opportunity to understand key aspects of the Boulevard corridor character and its physical relationship to surrounding areas and neighborhoods.

At the end of the tour participants convened informally at City Hall for a debriefing session that included a review of high and low points along the Boulevard corridor in terms of physical appearance, quality of life, and traffic conditions.



Images from the site tour.



## Task Force Meetings

The Task Force met monthly from April to mid-November 2007. The first set of meetings were information sessions on topics that included: a general orientation to the vision process; review of current development proposals along the Boulevard corridor; and national and California trends in transit oriented development (this was a presentation given by Neal I. Payton, partner in charge of the Los Angeles office of Torti Gallas and Partners.)

Following Community Workshop #1, which was held in July, the Task Force began to sort through the ideas collected at that meeting and formulate principles. These principles are presented in their final form in Chapter 3.

Concurrently, the Task Force began selecting images from communities throughout the nation. The images are used throughout this report, particularly in Chapter 4 where they are used to illustrate conditions along the Boulevard suggested by the public.

Both the principles and the images selected by the Task Force were presented to the public and tested during Community Workshop #2.

In addition to stewarding the ideas gathered from the public, Task Force members participated and facilitated small group activities at the two Community Workshops.



Task Force members helped facilitate the Strong Places, Weak Places exercise during Community Workshop #1.

## Community Workshop #1

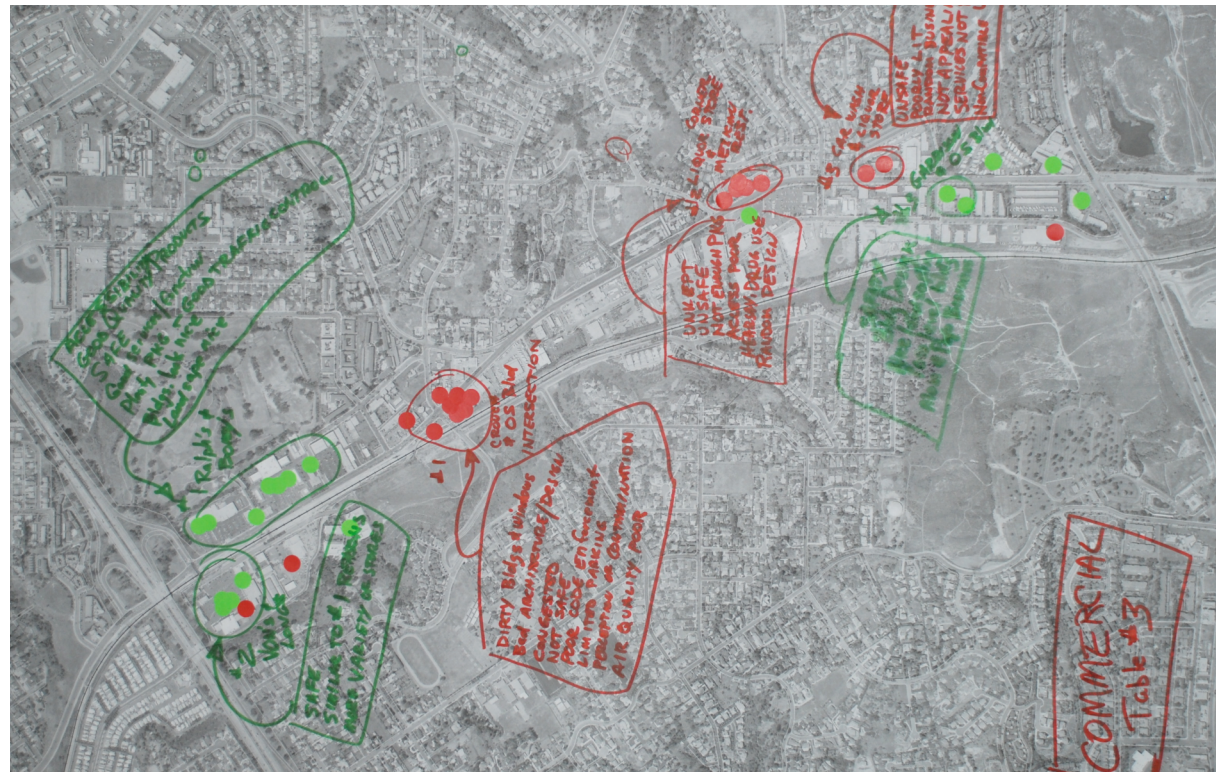
The purpose of Community Workshop #1 was to generate ideas that could be used as the foundation of the vision. Over 150 residents participated, working in small groups of eight to ten people.

The tool to generate ideas was an exercise called Strong Places, Weak Places. Participants were asked to identify on a map strong and weak places in the following categories: Walking, Driving and Parking, Environmental Features, Commercial Areas, Open Space and Recreation, and Boulevard Character.

A small group was formed for each of the six categories. Participants identified strong and weak places, discussed what made weak places weak and strong places strong, and brainstormed recommendations for the future.

At the end of the exercise each group reported its conclusion and its ideas. The reporting enabled participants to get a preview of what the Oceanside Boulevard corridor would be like in the future.

The ideas gathered at Community Workshop #1 were synthesized into the vision's principles.



Images from Community Workshop #1.



## Selecting Images

An important component in the development of a vision is the ability to visualize ideas and illustrate principles. In *A Vision for the Oceanside Boulevard Corridor* this was done through a selection process that used images collected from other communities.

The Task Force conducted the process of selection over several meetings. The process started immediately after Community Workshop #1. By quickly reviewing the major themes that had emerged as general consensus at the workshop, staff and consultants assembled images that illustrated those themes. The initial set presented to the Task Force ranged from natural landscapes to highly urbanized conditions and varied dramatically in scale, type, intensity of use, and design.

Task Force members were asked to collect images and add them to the image bank. A total of 75 images were ultimately selected and rated by the public. The full set of images is available on the City of Oceanside website: [www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/pdf/OBTF\\_ratedimg\\_V2.pdf](http://www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/pdf/OBTF_ratedimg_V2.pdf)



The highest and lowest rated images during the Task Force selection process. The green dots indicate that the image is appropriate for the Boulevard corridor, the red dots indicate that the image is not appropriate.



## Community Workshop #2

The purpose of community Workshop #2 was twofold – to test the principles and images selected by the Task Force, and to identify special places along the Boulevard corridor where development and redevelopment could occur. The results of the principle rating are discussed in Chapter 3. Special Places identified by the public as well as their corresponding images can be found in Chapter 4.



Images from Community Workshop #2.



## 3. Principles

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Principles are statements of purpose that help determine the quality, pattern and character of future development. The twenty principles for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor were created using ideas and comments provided by the public at Community Workshop #1. The Oceanside Boulevard Task Force further refined those principles.

The principles were reviewed and prioritized by the public at Community Workshop #2 held on September 18. Participants were asked to rate how important each principle is to the future of the Oceanside Boulevard corridor using a scale from one to five (1 = not important and 5 = very important).

The principles are listed on the next page. They are arranged in priority order based on the rating results at the September workshop. The numbers in parentheses after each principle indicate the average rating out of a possible score of 5.

## Principles

1. Develop a master plan that reflects the vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor in an inclusive, comprehensive, and deliberate fashion. (4.6)
2. Transform the Oceanside Boulevard corridor into a beautiful, vibrant, neighborhood friendly, and safe street that defines the character of our community. (4.5)
3. Landscape and beautify the entire length of the corridor emphasizing the use of native trees as the primary street tree, incorporating drought tolerant plants, and placing utilities underground. (4.4)
4. Seek a plan and policies that will decrease the concentration of social service providers in the Oceanside Boulevard corridor and share them with the rest of the city. (4.4)
5. Beautify the Sprinter corridor, minimize noise, and reduce the barrier between the North and South side of the rail line while enhancing and emphasizing quality public spaces. (4.4)
6. Develop new areas and retrofit existing ones to offer quality services including shopping, restaurants and a mix of uses - such as residential, commercial, and entertainment – that serve a diverse population and promote vibrant activities on the Boulevard corridor. (4.4)
7. Actively recruit new businesses that better fit with the physical, social, and environmental vision of the corridor, phasing out incompatible uses and providing incentives for retention and relocation of businesses. (4.4)
8. Promote and enable high quality design, signage, and public art to transform the current appearance of the Oceanside Boulevard corridor and to create welcoming entryways to the community. (4.3)
9. Design the corridor to provide sidewalks, paths, and a variety of public open spaces encouraging walking and biking throughout the area and creating attractive and continuous pedestrian and bicycle connections. (4.3)
10. Promote economic development in the Oceanside Boulevard corridor in a way that carefully balances goals of revenue generation and job creation with quality of life. This approach will enable the vision to pay for itself. (4.2)
11. Introduce traffic management techniques to improve traffic flow, manage intersections, separate through- and local-traffic, and streamline turns on the Oceanside Boulevard corridor and surrounding streets. (4.1)
12. Study and evaluate the traffic implications of new development including the transportation impacts of the Sprinter line on intersecting roads. (4.1)
13. Make the Loma Alta creek an integral part of the Oceanside Boulevard corridor plan: the core of an open space and trail system that connects the Oceanside Boulevard corridor area to the ocean. (4.1)
14. Rejuvenate the Loma Alta creek and restore native plants in the creek bed. (4.0)
15. Create a unique sense of place by embracing Loma Alta Creek as the theme for the valley with signs, landscapes, and places that reinforce that theme. (3.7)
16. Implement the vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor with standards that support sustainability, reduce energy and water use, and encourage the use of renewable or recycled materials for public and private developments. (3.6)
17. Change the Oceanside Boulevard corridor into distinctive high quality areas and places differentiated by character, topography, and history. (3.5)
18. Consider creating richer street network connectivity where feasible. (3.4)
19. Develop a plan to aggressively recruit high paying jobs.

After rating the principles, Community Workshop #2 used the principles to identify special places along the Boulevard corridor for new development, redevelopment, and infill. (See Chapter 4.)

## 4. Special Places

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Participants identified four “Special Places” with striking consistency. The places are indicated above with the letters A, B, C, and D. The A and B areas were identified as “Special Places” by all nine tables. The C and D areas were identified by five out of nine tables.

After rating the principles and the images selected by the Task Force, participants at Community Workshop #2 worked in small groups to identify special places along the Boulevard corridor. These are locations where the types of livable and vibrant places suggested by the principles and images could best occur. (See figure at left.)

In addition to identifying special places, participants were also asked to identify activity places along the Loma Alta Creek as well as natural places that should be set aside for conservation, habitat, and passive use. Here too, strong consensus emerged from the participants.

Participants then described the character of the areas they identified. After the workshop, images were attached to each area based on the descriptions given by participants. The following pages use the descriptions provided by workshop participants and some of the images selected by the Task Force to illustrate each of the Special Places. The reader should keep in mind that the boundaries of each area are general and that they will be further refined in the development of the Master Plan.

## Special Places - Area A



Special Places - Area A includes the segment of the Oceanside Boulevard corridor closer to I-5. The area is predominantly commercial.

Area A was described as an important entryway to the community. It was identified as a place where redevelopment can occur to achieve a mix of office, residential, and retail uses that are strongly urban in character. The area is described as having active sidewalks, restaurants, and shops with possibly one large parking structure at its eastern edge.



Diverse building types and uses support intensive activities.



A variety of open spaces, formal and informal, provide opportunities for community gatherings (see above right and left).



Restaurants are activity generators that add vitality to the public realm.



Quality paving is the type of detail that contributes to a strong sense of place.

## Special Places - Area B



Special Places - Area B is located in the proximity of the Crouch Street Sprinter station. It offers an opportunity for new development due to the proximity to a large undeveloped property. It is strategically located to take advantage of the newly built Sprinter station.

Area B should provide for a mix of uses, and it should be pedestrian friendly. Structured parking should be built to encourage a walkable environment while facilitating commuter access to the Sprinter station.



Integrating rail with shops and residences.



Attractive rail stations with easy drop-off movements.

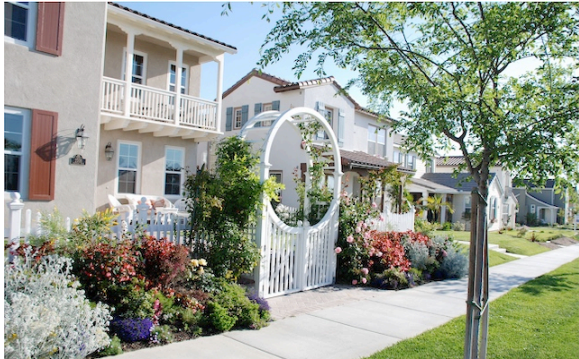
**Special Places - Area B**



Commercial sidewalk activities.



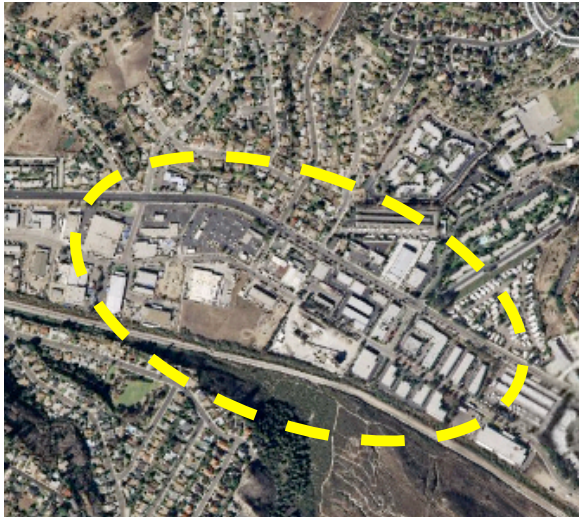
A mix of residential types can be integrated into new transit oriented development (see above and below right).



Sidewalks in quieter residential streets (see above and right).



## Special Places - Area C



Special Places - Area C is generally located in the area between the Oceanside Boulevard corridor and the Sprinter rail line. It is an area of predominantly light and heavy industrial uses.

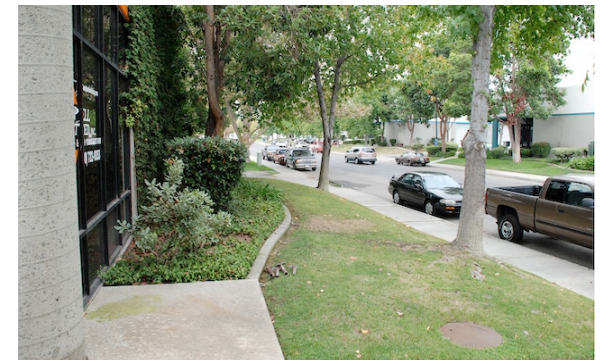
The area provides an opportunity for redevelopment and revitalization. The heavy industrial uses currently present in Area C do not reflect the community's vision for the future of the corridor and need to be converted into a mixture of light industrial, office, and retail uses. Area C could potentially become a centerpiece for a developing arts district, such as the one found in Solana Beach. A park facility should also be incorporated into plans for redeveloping Area C.



The Cedros Design District in Solana Beach was suggested as a model for redeveloping industrial sites.



Pleasant streets within Oceanside's light industrial area.



## Special Places - Area D



Special Places - Area D is located at the western edge of the study area. Area D is suitable for walkable, mixed use development around the newly built Sprinter station. Development here should be somewhat less intense than that found around the Sprinter station in Area B. This location is also ideal for introducing a potential new park in the Oceanside Boulevard corridor.



A transit station with less intensive development.



Small scale shops add to a sense of place.



A tranquil type of open space.

## Activity Places on Loma Alta Creek

The public identified Activity Places on portions of Loma Alta Creek between Areas A and B and around Area D.

These Activity Places should be designed to take full advantage of the Creek as a unique natural feature in the community. They should include landscaping, footbridges, creek-side restaurants, and other amenities that will promote public enjoyment of the creek and create a vibrant atmosphere.

These Activity Places will complement the mixed use development occurring along the Oceanside Boulevard corridor. Limited, pedestrian-only access to the creek will help protect the area's natural qualities.



Footbridges integrate a creek within their surroundings.

**Activity Places on Loma  
Alta Creek**

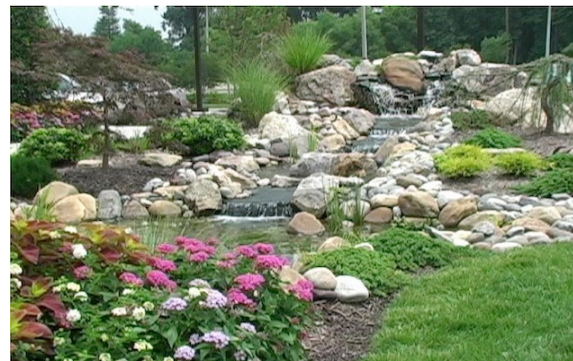


The natural treatment of a creek can complement a mix of uses (image courtesy of Urban Advantage).

## Natural Places on Loma

### Alta Creek

The portion of Loma Alta Creek between Areas B and D should remain natural and be preserved for recreation and habitat protection. This portion of the creek should retain a “wilderness” feel. Trails can be incorporated into the area to allow for biking and walking in a natural environment.



Two examples of maintaining a wilderness feel amid development.

## 5. Vision and Policy Steps

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### **Preamble**

In setting forth a vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor the Task Force wants to acknowledge some of the implications and limitations of the vision itself. These include:

- Recognizing that the principles and ideas embodied in the vision extend beyond the boundaries of Oceanside Boulevard, and that the areas east and west of the Boulevard should be treated in ways that are consistent with those principles and ideas.
- Understanding the impact that agencies operating outside of the City's jurisdiction have on the Boulevard (for example North County Transit District, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Fish and Game). In light of this, acknowledging that better communication and coordination with those agencies is critical to furthering the successful implementation of the vision.

- Honoring the historic fact that there have been plans adopted for areas within the corridor, and that these plans are still standing and should be recognized while deliberating and implementing the vision.

### **Creating a Vision Statement**

After Community Workshop #2, it became apparent from the rating of the principles that they could be distilled into the following vision statement that captures the intent of the vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor.

### **The Vision**

*The vision is for a beautiful and sustainable creek along a vibrant and prosperous corridor.*

*The Oceanside Boulevard corridor becomes a well-planned, beautiful, safe, prosperous, and environmentally-friendly place that defines the character of our community. It is landscaped predominantly with native plants; offers quality services including shopping, restaurants and a mix of other uses; serves a diverse population; welcomes residents and visitors as*

*the entryway to the community; is rich in public art; supports a variety of activities that benefit the local economy; enables the easy movement of people, vehicles, and transit; embraces the Loma Alta Creek as the core of its open space and trail system; is sustainable; and includes high quality areas differentiated by character, topography and history.*

### **Policy Steps**

Further review of the ratings indicated that with minor changes the principles could be turned into a set of policy steps organized around the following five themes.

Steps to a Well Planned Corridor

Steps to a Beautiful Corridor

Steps to a Safe and Efficient Corridor

Steps to a Prosperous Corridor

Steps to an Environmentally Sustainable Corridor.

The Policy Steps illustrate what needs to be done to turn the vision into reality and transform the Oceanside Boulevard corridor.



A rendering of what the Oceanside Boulevard corridor could look like in Special Places – Area A.

### Steps to a Well Planned Corridor

1. Develop a master plan that reflects the vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor in an inclusive, comprehensive, and deliberate fashion.
2. Seek a plan and policies that will decrease the concentration of social service providers in the Oceanside Boulevard corridor and share them with the rest of the city.
3. Develop new areas and retrofit existing ones to offer quality services including shopping, restaurants and a mix of uses - such as residential, commercial, and entertainment – that serve a diverse population and promote vibrant activities on the Boulevard corridor.
4. Design the corridor to provide sidewalks, paths, and a variety of public open spaces encouraging walking and biking throughout the area and creating attractive and continuous pedestrian and bicycle connections.



A well planned, coherent physical environment can support a variety of uses that change over time.

5. Change the Oceanside Boulevard corridor into distinctive high quality areas and places differentiated by character, topography, and history.

### Steps to a Beautiful Corridor

1. Landscape and beautify the entire length of the corridor emphasizing the use of native trees as the primary street tree, incorporating drought tolerant plants and placing utilities underground.
2. Promote and enable high quality design, signage, and public art to transform the current appearance of the Oceanside Boulevard corridor and create welcoming entryways to the community.
3. Create a unique sense of place by embracing Loma Alta Creek as the theme for the valley with signs, landscapes, and places that reinforce that theme.



The Loma Alta Creek and the use of native trees are recommended as the theme to beautify the Boulevard corridor.

### Steps to a Safe and Efficient Corridor

1. Beautify the Sprinter corridor, minimize noise, and reduce the barrier between the North and South side of the rail line while enhancing and emphasizing quality public spaces.
2. Introduce traffic management techniques to improve traffic flow, manage intersections, separate through- and local-traffic, and streamline turns on the Oceanside Boulevard corridor and surrounding streets.
3. Study and evaluate the traffic implications of new development including the transportation impacts of the Sprinter line on intersecting roads.

### Steps to a Prosperous Corridor

1. Actively recruit new businesses that better fit with the physical, social, and environmental vision of the corridor, phasing out incompatible uses and providing incentives for retention and relocation of businesses.

2. Promote economic development in the Oceanside Boulevard corridor in a way that carefully balances goals of revenue generation and job creation with quality of life.
3. Enable the vision to pay for itself.
4. Develop a plan to aggressively recruit high paying jobs.

### Steps to an Environmentally Sustainable Corridor

1. Make the Loma Alta creek an integral part of the Oceanside Boulevard corridor plan: the core of an open space and trail system that connects the Oceanside Boulevard corridor area to the ocean.
2. Rejuvenate the Loma Alta creek and restore native plants in the creek bed.
3. Implement the vision for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor with standards that support sustainability, reduce energy and water use, and encourage the use of renewable or recycled materials for public and private developments.

Buildings that focus on the public realm contribute to the quality of the walking experience.



## 6. Implementing the Vision

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This chapter presents three recommendations to the Oceanside City Council. These recommendations were discussed at the November 13 meeting of the Task Force and adopted with one dissenting vote. The dissenting member expressed the concern that the Vision does not have enough specificity to successfully enable the application of the “IS” zoning designation.

The Task Force strongly recommends that decision-makers expedite the implementation of the “IS” zoning designation and the completion of the Master Plan.

The recommendations are:

**1. Develop a Master Plan for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor**

The intent of this recommendation is to enable the implementation of the vision with a Master Plan and land use regulations that can be adopted and have the force of law. The recommendation itself stems from the principle ranked highest by the Task Force and by the public. The vision described in this report (including the principles, steps, images, and special places) should become the foundation for and the

focus of the development of a Master Plan for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor. The Plan will use the vision as the springboard to establish detailed strategies to guide new development and infill development along the corridor and to transform the corridor into the sequence of walkable, well designed, vibrant and prosperous special places envisioned by the public. The Master Plan process should also include revisions to current zoning through the use of better development regulations, in order to ensure that the vision described and illustrated in this report is sustained over its implementation.

**2. Adopt “IS” (Interim Study Overlay District) zoning designation linked to Vision’s recommendations**

The intent of this recommendation is to put in place the Overlay District (IS) zoning designation to fill the time gap between the Vision and the completion of the Master Plan for the area.

The IS designation enables the linking of the Vision’s recommendations to any development application submitted while the designation is in place. This designation inhibits the approval of proposals that are inconsistent with the principles of the Vision.

The Task Force debated this recommendation. Some Task Force members remembered its effective implementation as part of previous plans and wanted to see a stronger recommendation to inhibit the implementation of projects currently in the approval process.

**3. Work with corridor property owners to create a partnership in support of master planning effort**

The intent of this recommendation is to develop a partnership between property owners and the City in the development of the Master Plan. The City Council should direct staff to initiate a dialogue with corridor property owners and to seek their support in the development of the

Master Plan. This should include funding support in view of the development benefits brought about by the Master Plan.



Several samples of Master Plans were presented to the Task Force as models for the Oceanside Boulevard corridor Master Plan.