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History and Planning Sub-Areas

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Chapter 2 History & Planning Sub-Areas

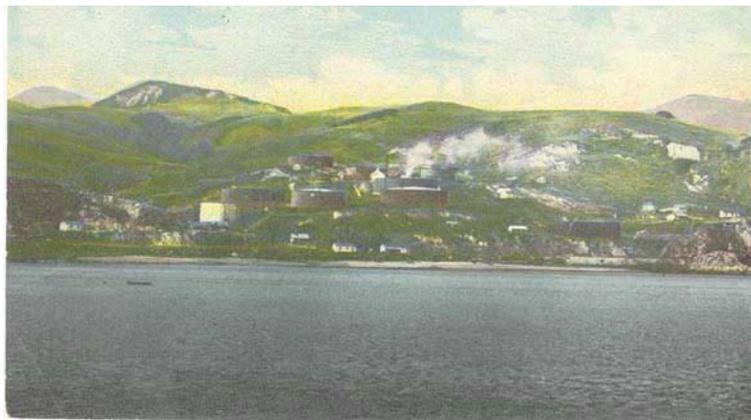
A. History of Port San Luis Pier & Harbor

Port San Luis may be said to have started with the Port San Luis (Harford) Pier originally proposed in 1868 by local entrepreneur, John Harford. Harford was probably not the first to notice the advantages of locating a pier in the west end of San Luis Bay: the two pre-existing piers at Mallagh Landing (Pirates' Cove) and Peoples' Wharf (Avila Pier) were very hazardous in rough weather, and could not match the attractiveness of the west bay with its sheltered cove and deeper water. Late in 1871, Mr. Harford proceeded with his construction plans, and in 1873, the wharf was completed to a length of 540 feet where waters averaged 15 feet in depth.

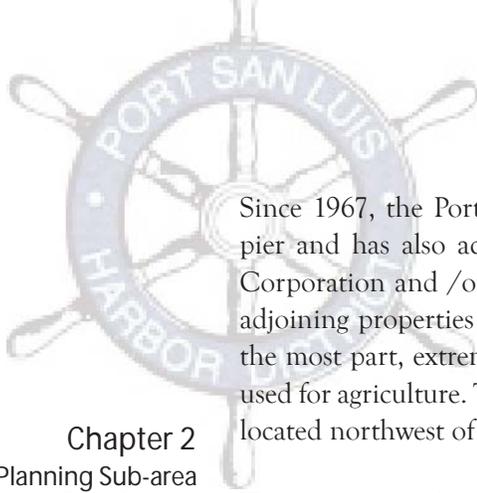
To service the pier, Mr. Harford constructed and operated a 30-inch narrow gauge railroad, which ultimately became a part of the Pacific Coast Railroad Company, extending from San Luis Obispo to Los Olivos with a major portion of its freight and passengers passing through Harford Pier. Harford extended the wharf to 1500 feet in 1876, (its present configuration), where the average depth was 17 feet at low tide. In 1882, the Ocean Hotel was constructed at the base of the wharf, was later purchased by the Marre family, and renamed Hotel Marre.

Through its early years, Port Harford was an essential link in the County's exports of dairy products, grain, cattle, hogs, and other farm and mineral products. At the turn of the century, oil was discovered in San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara Counties. Standard Oil Company erected several oil storage tanks on a hillside just north of the pier, now known as the "Harbor Terrace" site. The wharf was extended an additional 1400 feet, into 31 feet of water, which was adequate to handle the largest oil tankers of the day.

With the arrival of the standard-gauge Southern Pacific Railroad lines throughout the County in the early 1900's, coupled with the Great Depression in 1929, use of the port and of the Pacific Coast Railroad Company declined; even the lucrative oil transportation facility was abandoned and that 1,400-ft. extension was demolished to aid navigation. By the early 1950's, the pier was in such a state of disrepair that it was unable to support vehicles or freight—and even became hazardous for foot traffic. The pier was acquired by the Harbor District in 1965 and rehabilitated during the next several years, thus re-creating the historic pier to serve modern functions.



Historic photo of the oil tank farm on Harbor Terrace.



Since 1967, the Port San Luis Harbor District has developed an 8-acre landfill abutting the pier and has also acquired various related properties adjacent to the harbor. The Leucadia Corporation and /or Pacific Gas and Electric Company own the adjoining properties. These adjoining properties are generally vacant in the immediate vicinity of the harbor and are, for the most part, extremely steep with limited access. These neighboring properties are generally used for agriculture. The primary use of the property is the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, located northwest of the Port.

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The roadway leading to Port San Luis follows the alignment of the old Pacific Coast Railway right-of-way, which was constructed by John Harford along with the pier in 1873 and acquired by the Pacific Coast Railway Company in 1882. The only remnant of this railroad in the Beach and Bluff area is the old trestle that crossed San Luis Obispo Creek; this structure had deteriorated badly, however, and was finally removed in early 1982.

In 1914, the Railway Company constructed the pipeline wharf that intersected this waterfront area. The pier was purchased by the Union Oil Company (later Unocal) in 1940, but the tidelands under the pier were still owned by the Harbor District and leased to the oil company. The old wood pier was destroyed in a heavy storm in 1983 and was reconstructed as a steel pier seen today. In 2001, Unocal gifted to California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo the pier for use as a Marine Research and Education Facility. The Harbor District granted a long-term lease to Cal Poly for this purpose. Unocal continues to own the landside parcel at the base of the pier next to Avila Beach Drive (See Beach and Bluff Existing Conditions, Figure 7).

In 1942, the railroad went bankrupt and Elton Tognazzini ultimately acquired its assets. For a short time after World War II, Mr. Tognazzini operated a toll road until the Harbor District acquired the right-of-way in 1964, then called Harford Drive. The road and bridge were improved in 1968 to a 24-40'-wide section with shoulders and curbs through a cooperative County, State, and Federal improvement project in conjunction with the construction of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) nuclear power plant at Diablo Canyon. The County assumed management of the road at that time. The Marre Land and Cattle Company also contributed a right-of-way for the road, and PG&E provided some funding for the bridge. A concrete barge landing, gatehouse, and access road were constructed by the local utility company to serve the power plant. These facilities (including a small portion of Diablo Canyon Road) are all located on Harbor District property. The shoreline area along Avila Beach Drive suffered heavy storm damage in March 1983, which was repaired by the County Public Works Department due to the right of way responsibility.

B. Port San Luis Planning Sub-Area Descriptions

The following descriptions provide contextual information of the seven Port Planning Sub-Areas from “Today” to “Tomorrow,” including physical descriptions of the natural and built settings, common uses, associated features, and the future vision. Each Sub-Area description is accompanied by an Existing Conditions Plan to illustrate the current composition and distribution of uses. Conceptual diagrams of the future distribution of uses and proposed improvements for each Planning Sub-Area accompany the Improvement Program in Chapter 4.



Achieving the visions outlined in this chapter is dependent upon the economic feasibility of the improvement projects recommended for each sub-area, as well as the overall financial sustainability of Port operations and capital improvements.

The organization of Sub-area descriptions is according to the land use categories designated by the County's LCP. Two land use categories affect the land and water areas administered by the Harbor District: Public Facilities and Recreation. The Public Facilities category applies to the Open Water,* Harford Pier, Harford Landing, Beach and Bluffs, Harbor Terrace, and the Lighthouse. The Recreation category only applies to Avila Beach, Pier, and Parking Lot.

PUBLIC FACILITIES: The following descriptions are for properties in the Public Facilities land use category of the County of San Luis Obispo's San Luis Bay Planning Area (LCP).

1. Open Water*

Today...

The Harbor District manages open water areas that are within the District's ownership including virtually all of the waters of San Luis Obispo Bay between Point San Luis and the Sunset Palisades area of Pismo Beach. The Open Water sub-area focuses primarily on the immediate inner harbor, consisting of 520 acres of sandy-bottomed open bay, including areas under Harford Pier, Avila Pier, and the Cal Poly Marine Education and Research Pier (formerly UNOCAL Pier).

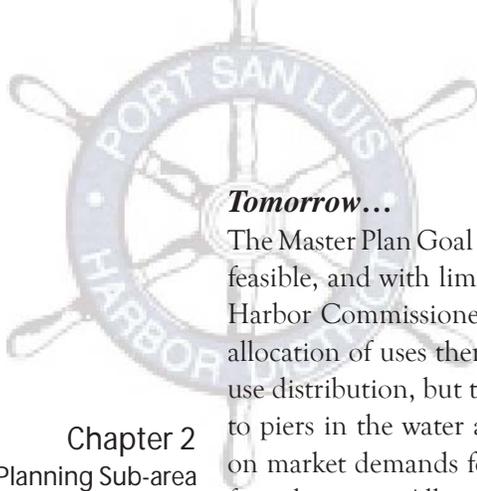
The primary active use of this area is for navigation and mooring of commercial and recreational vessels. The Open Water also serves a variety of water-oriented recreational uses related to Olde Port Beach, Avila Beach, Pirate's Cove, and numerous sheltered inlets below the Sunset Palisades area of Pismo Beach. Marine biological resources in the Bay support numerous activities at Port San Luis including recreational fishing, which includes fishing from piers, small boats, and charter fishing boats, commercial fishing, sightseeing, whale watching, scuba diving, and bird watching, among others.



Cal Poly Pier sits in the Open Water planning sub-area.

Currently, there are approximately 280 moorings in use in the main harbor, divided among recreational power and sailing vessels, commercial fishing, guest boats, and about a dozen recreational moorings are on the west side of Avila Pier. A floating pen /aquaculture facility is located in the Open Water as well. The sub-area also encompasses a 2,400-foot rubble mound breakwater and several islands, most notably Whalers Island, which is incorporated into the breakwater, and Smith Island, which lies a few hundred feet north. The US Army Corps of Engineers owns and controls the breakwater. (Figure 4, Open Water Area Plan)

* Technically, the Open Water Area is not designated under the Public Facilities use category per se, because it is not governed by the County of San Luis Obispo. For simplification, this Master Plan includes Open Water-related discussions, policies, and improvements organized under this designation. Although the Open Water Planning Sub-Area only comprises 520 acres, the Harbor District manages water areas out to sea three miles.



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The Master Plan Goal for the Open Water Sub-Area is “A water area that is manageable, financially feasible, and with limited user conflicts, which provides adequate public access.” The Board of Harbor Commissioners establishes policy regarding the organization of the water area and the allocation of uses therein. The Harbor District does not anticipate major changes in water area use distribution, but this Master Plan recommends adding new boating access facilities adjacent to piers in the water area. The sheltered area of the harbor has limited capacity, so depending on market demands for water area uses, adding new facilities to water area may preclude space for other uses. Allocating water space requires balancing demand simultaneous with avoiding conflicts among uses. No Open Water Area physical improvements are proposed.

2. Harford Pier

Today...

Harford Pier is the visual focal point and activity center of Port San Luis Harbor (Figure 5). The pier serves both commercial and recreational fishing functions and provides harbor users and visitors with direct water access to boats, fishing opportunities, restaurants, retail fish sales, and scenic vistas. Visitors consistently remark on how much they enjoy the character of the working pier and harbor.

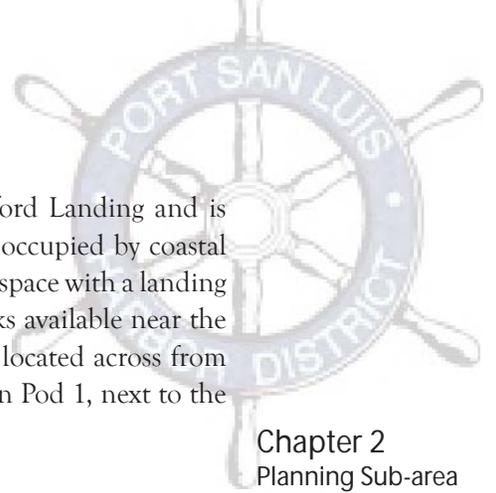
In 1992, the California State Historic Preservation Office designated Harford Pier a national historic structure, which requires the Harbor District to preserve and rehabilitate the pier. Due to its age, type of construction, and heavy use, the pier demands continual structural maintenance and repairs for such pier components as decking, the road area, utilities, and boating access facilities.

The pier is a primary access point to boats in the mooring area and the anchorage. The chief means of access to vessels on moorings from the pier is via personal skiffs. There are presently skiff racks and moorings (tie-ups) for 67 skiffs at Harford Pier. The pier has four public hoists and four private hoists dispersed down the length of it. Public landings exist in three locations: two fixed, and one floating. Adjacent to Harford Pier is a floating work dock.

Most of the pier is developed, but there is modest potential to expand some uses and redevelop others, particularly at Pod 1 and the west side of the pier terminus. A minimum 10-foot setback around the pier’s perimeter and buildings provides an emergency escape route for pedestrians and also serves as pier-fishing space. Outside the western pier railing along the pier stem, many of the old 12” x 12” wood caps extend up to 20 feet-over the water on the west side of Harford Pier to the edge of the historical footprint.

Pier Stem

The pier is open for vehicular traffic and limited parking is available. Many visitors use the walkway along the length of the eastern edge of the pier to reach the pier terminus. Walking along this path is difficult for some due to the uneven surface of the walkway and often pedestrians walk along the pier roadway to take advantage of its even surface.



Located on the east side of the pier, Pod 1 sits about 250 feet from Harford Landing and is the first visual impression visitors have of Harford Pier. Pod 1 is currently occupied by coastal dependent and visitor serving uses. A sport-fishing lease occupies a 20' by 20' space with a landing and hoist reserved exclusively for this company. The cleaning racks and sinks available near the foot of the pier also enhance sport-fishing activities. Six parking spaces are located across from Pod 1. An outside fish buying and retail sale licensed space is also located on Pod 1, next to the sport fishing lease.

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Terminus

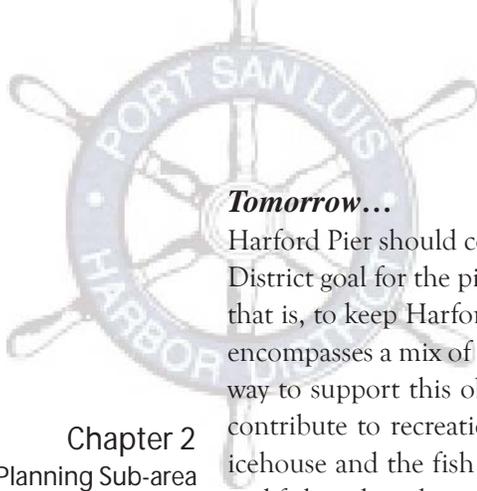
The dominant structure on the pier is the old Pacific Coast Railway warehouse building at the pier terminus. A number of uses and activities take place in this area:

- Commercial fish unloading
- Marine education
- Icehouse
- Public fishing
- Open pier and viewing space
- Harbor Patrol Offices
- Skiff storage & launching
- Parking
- Sewer / bilge pumpout facility
- Seafood processing & retail fish sales
- Patrol Boat tie-ups
- NOAA tide station
- Diesel Fuel dock
- National Weather Service weather station
- Cold storage facilities
- Boat fueling facilities
- Two restaurants
- Public Restrooms



Aerial image of Harford Pier and surrounding water area.

Photo Copyright © 2002-2003 Kenneth Adelman, California Coastal Records Project,
www.californiacoastline.org



Tomorrow...

Harford Pier should continue to be the visual and activity focal point of the Harbor. The Harbor District goal for the pier is to uphold the pier's time-honored character and traditional activities, that is, to keep Harford Pier "An historically authentic and structurally sound working pier that encompasses a mix of coastal dependent, coastal related, and some visitor serving uses." A simple way to support this objective is to limit new uses to those that are water-oriented and /or that contribute to recreational and commercial boating and fishing. For example, uses such as the icehouse and the fish markets, and boating access facilities not only provide services to boating and fishing but also contribute to the maritime environment that has been a part of the character of the Port for generations. Additionally, locating new structures and activities to avoid conflicts with boating and fishing on the pier and in the water area ensures other uses do not interfere with their needs. (See Figure 12, Harford Pier Conceptual Improvement Plan, in Chapter 4)

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Since the pier provides public waterfront access, new structures should be situated away from pedestrian walkways and stay clear of the emergency pedestrian setback. It is also important that new and redeveloped structures facilitate maintenance access to the pier structure and abide by the Design Guidelines for the Pier (see Chapter 4 and Appendix F).

Pier Stem

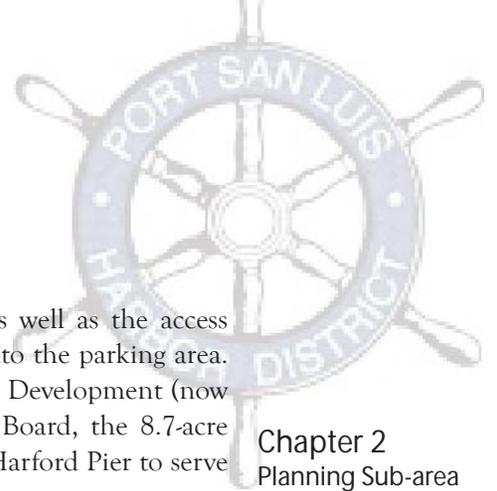
The District can improve recreational boating facilities through increasing skiff storage at the pier, preferably near existing access facilities (e.g., ladders, hoists, and landings), and accommodating visiting boaters with another fixed landing along the pier stem. To improve pedestrian accessibility, the deck area along the western edge of the pier stem will be extended to both enlarge the pier drive and create room for another pedestrian accessway. In addition, the pier drive and eastern walkway should continue to be repaired. These enhancements could integrate fire improvements at the same time by installing fire grates and meeting fire standards for road width.

Visiting boaters will have more options to visit the Port through the addition of a new fixed landing to the Pier, located between Pod 1 and the Pier terminus. This facility will accommodate transient boaters who wish to do business with one of the restaurants, marine supply, or other Port enterprises.

Pod 1 will be redeveloped and expanded to improve the appearance and utility of the existing lease space. Buildings should be visually linked to the pier and each other with compatible architecture. The addition of a new public restroom to this facility, as well as interpretive exhibits along the walkway, promotes the public use at this part of the pier.

Terminus

To supplement employee and visitor transportation and parking options, bicycle racks will be added to the parking area at the pier terminus. Under the warehouse canopy, two lease spaces may accommodate new coastal dependent or coastal related uses. There is vacant space under the canopy outside of the required setbacks that could be used as lease space or skiff storage. If and when the Harbor Patrol vacates their space, additional lease space will open at that location. Several interpretive exhibits and benches, judiciously placed along the pier edge at the terminus, enhance the value of the pier's open space. The addition of skiff racks will augment existing boating access facilities (hoists, racks, and ladders), expanding water transportation options for mooring lessees.



3. Harford Landing

Today...

In 1963, the Harbor District acquired the land abutting Harford Pier as well as the access road to the pier, which extends from the end of the County right-of-way into the parking area. With assistance from the California Department of Navigation and Ocean Development (now Department of Boating and Waterways) and the Wildlife Conservation Board, the 8.7-acre Harford Landing Area was created from landfill in 1967 at the foot of the Harford Pier to serve as parking and boat haul-out and repair area.

Harford Landing (Figure 6) comprises uses that are physically and financially supportive of uses and functions on and around Harford Pier and the harbor. The predominant use of the landfill area is a paved parking lot striped for passenger cars and trailered boats. About 248 automobile spaces are available, of which about 35 spaces are 40' or longer to accommodate boat trailers. At the entrance to Harford Landing are the Fisherman's Memorial linear park, a boat wash down facility, and the East Parking Lot. At the foot of the hillside are a restaurant and an area that is often used for storage and staging. A boat repair yard is located against the bluffs immediately behind the District office and includes a 40,975 square foot public boatyard area with a water quality controlled drainage and filtration system.

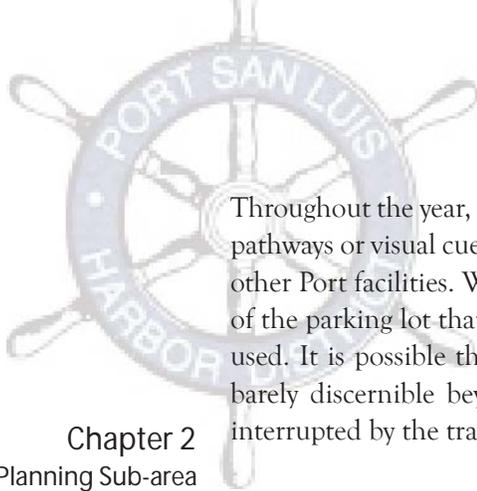
Adjacent to the boatyard is a 5,540 square foot maintenance complex that includes area for Harbor District vessels, equipment, and maintenance buildings with public restrooms and showers. In front of the boatyard is the District office (Administration Building) and public restrooms. Along the water at the north (down-coast) end of Harford Landing is a bait-and-tackle store, marine supply, two fishing platforms, and trailer boat launching facility in a semi-protected boat basin. A 50-ton mobile boat hoist concrete pier sits at the water's edge, slightly inside the parking area.



The Port San Luis Boatyard and parking lot sit at the south end of Harford Landing.

Parking and vehicle circulation through this lot fluctuates and is largely dependent on the weather. During the winter months and on weekends with cold or foggy weather, parking and circulation generally are not difficult, although frequently winter storm waves overwash the rocky edge and deposit debris, forcing the closure of parking areas close to the water's edge because of safety hazards and maintenance needs.

Weekend traffic and parking demands are at their peak during warm summer months with recreational fishermen, tourists, beach visitors, and employees and patrons of the local restaurants circulating through the lot and competing for parking spaces. Often compounding this situation are trailer boat launch users.



Throughout the year, pedestrian circulation occurs randomly at Harford Landing with no formal pathways or visual cues to orient visitors to destinations like the pier, viewing areas, restrooms, or other Port facilities. While there are paved or compact-dirt paths all along the coastal rocky edge of the parking lot that provide almost continuous shoreline access, the paths are not commonly used. It is possible that they are underused because visitors do not know they exist; the paths barely discernible beyond the line of parked vehicles. The path has no seating areas and is interrupted by the trailer boat launch, mobile boat launch, and Harford Pier.

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Harford Landing will continue to be physically and financially supportive of established uses and activities at the harbor, particularly those that meet the needs of boating and fishing, public access, and waterfront visitors. (See Figure 13, Harford Landing Conceptual Improvement Plan, in Chapter 4)



The waterfront path and mobile boat hoist .

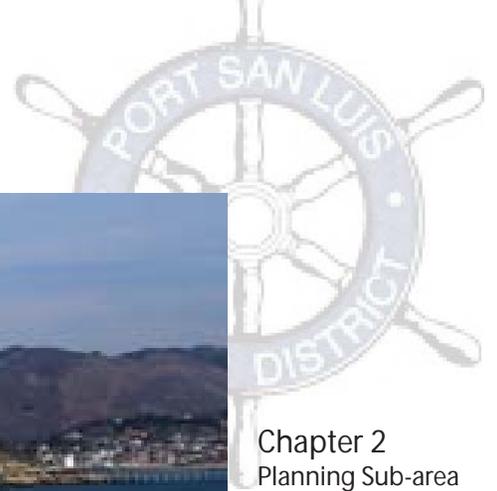
Preliminary designs show that reconfiguration of the lot could increase the number of parking spaces for autos and trailers, and may have the added benefit of improved circulation especially for vehicles pulling boat trailers in and out of the sport launch. With the relocation of the boatyard the East Parking Lot could augment boat trailer parking; this space may also be used as a flexible area for RV parking. The creation and implementation of a parking management plan including strategies such as seasonal parking meters, using remote parking lots for employee and fishermen's long-term parking needs, would alleviate parking congestion during peak periods.

A continuous pedestrian path along the water's edge will create a waterfront route with minimal interruptions. Interpretive displays placed at strategic intervals can provide educational information about San Luis Obispo Bay and the coastal terrace environment. The pathway should incorporate a low wall to separate walkers from the parked cars and allow comfortable sitting and viewing over the water, as well as prevent significant overwash into the lot.



A Port patron promotes a local catch.

Additional lease space may be available at the Administration Building and at the former Maintenance Shop Complex to support additional marine-related and visitor serving uses. Scuba divers will be able to launch into the bay on the west side of Harford Pier via a new launching platform.



4. Beach and Bluffs

Today...

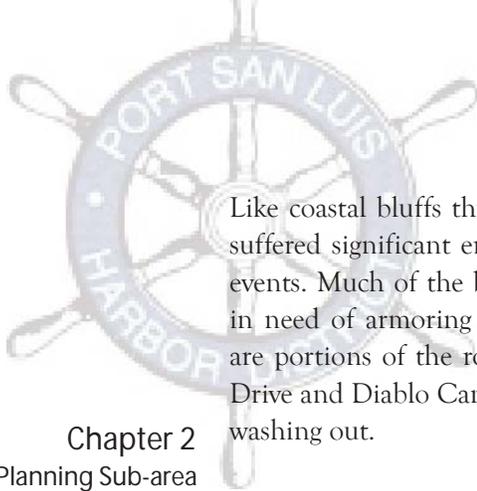
The Beach and Bluff Area includes the shoreline adjacent to Avila Beach Drive between the bridge at San Luis Obispo Creek and Harford Pier as indicated in Figure 3, Planning Sub-Areas and Figure 7, Beach and Bluff Existing Conditions. The Sub-area consists of the bluffs, hillsides, and the beach areas lying between the bridge and Harford Landing. Although not under the control of the Harbor District, Avila Beach Drive is considered part of the Sub-area. The County controls this one-mile stretch of roadway until approximately Diablo Canyon Road, after which it becomes District property. The roadway is the only access route to Port San Luis as well as the primary route for Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

The primary uses of the Beach and Bluff Sub-Area include entry to the Port and beaches for day use. Sightseeing from the roadway or bluff overlooks is also a popular activity. The road is virtually the only significant reach of low to moderate-speed public road in this part of the County that offers unobstructed views of the ocean to the motorist at close range.

Between the bridge and Harford Landing motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists share the roadway, which may be potentially unsafe. Most times of the year, the safety of non-motorized users is not a significant problem, but the experience of these users would be improved with dedicated travel areas. Currently, there are no safety improvements such as signs, crosswalks, or bike lanes along the right of way to provide safe passage for non-motorized travelers.

Nobi Point & Woodyard

Nobi Point and Woodyard are unimproved scenic overlooks with panoramic ocean views on the southeast side of Avila Beach Drive across from Harbor Terrace. The overlook areas on the bluffs offer excellent occasions to provide the public with a recreation area where they can appreciate uninterrupted scenic vistas of marine life, the rural waterfront landscape, and working harbor. Many visitors already use the bluffs for these purposes without additional improvements; however, oftentimes views at the overlooks are not available to public viewing because of RV parking and camping.



Like coastal bluffs throughout California, the waterfront bluffs along Avila Beach Drive have suffered significant erosion over the years because of persistent wave action and severe storm events. Much of the bluffs at Port San Luis are approximately 15 to 20 feet in height and are in need of armoring against further erosive wave action by riprap revetment, although there are portions of the road with shoreline protective devices. At the intersection of Avila Beach Drive and Diablo Canyon Road, there has been extensive erosion and the road is in jeopardy of washing out.

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Olde Port Beach and Fisherman's Beach

The two beaches that sit below the bluffs have adequate accessways from the road to the shoreline including a boat launch ramp, stairways, a handicap ramp, and two minor bluff trails. These beaches are not as heavily used as at Avila, but usage has grown considerably in recent years. Much of the increase relates to the presence of the small boat launch ramp. Olde Port Beach is one of the primary small-boat beach launches for kayaks, windboards, jet skis, and small sailing craft. Sunbathing, swimming, evening campfires, and picnicking are also some of the beach's representative activities. These beaches also make up one of the few County waterfront areas that allow pet-owners to play with their dogs.

The overlook areas on the bluffs offer excellent occasions to provide the public with a recreation area where they can appreciate uninterrupted scenic vistas of marine life, the rural waterfront landscape, and the working harbor.

Most times of the year, visitors park their vehicles on the beach side of the road, but during the summer they park on both sides. There are several public access points from the bluff area to Olde Port and Fisherman's beaches. Two stairways from Avila Beach Drive, the handicap ramp, launch ramp, and two trails link the beach to the roadway. Additional visitor facilities consist of a restroom facility and seasonal lifeguard station.

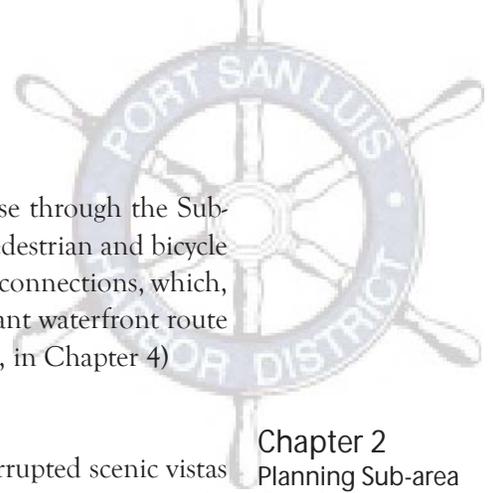
Cal Poly Marine Education and Research Pier

The Cal Poly Marine Education and Research Pier (formerly Unocal Pier) is located between Olde Port Beach and San Luis Obispo Creek. The University uses the 3,000-foot long pier for educational purposes and marine research. It is the only undergraduate facility of its kind between Monterey and Santa Barbara. Historically, Union Oil Company used the pier for transfer of oil to tankers and for receiving petroleum products for distribution to local markets. In 1983, the pier was completely destroyed in a storm. In 1985, it was replaced by a concrete and steel pier in the same footprint as the original pier. UNOCAL donated the Pier to the University in 2001. The same year, Port San Luis Harbor District entered into a forty-nine year ground lease with Cal Poly for the marine research and education facility.

Tomorrow...

The Beach and Bluff Area will remain relatively undeveloped, largely as it has always been: a scenic link between Avila Beach and the heart of Port San Luis. This rural waterfront strip, cradled between hillside bluffs and the sandy beaches, connects harbor users and visitors to Port facilities with minimal visual intrusions and an assortment of waterfront access points.

This sub-area is well situated to create strategic linkages among port properties and facilitate safe and adequate connections to the beach. As the California Coastal Trail becomes more popular, hikers and bicyclists will travel through the Beach and Bluff Area more frequently to reach the Pecho Coast Trailhead (docent-led only) and sandy beaches. Continuous pedestrian



and bicycle pathways planned, built, and maintained by the County traverse through the Sub-area from Avila Beach to Harford Landing along the County right of way. Pedestrian and bicycle access connections from Harford Landing connect seamlessly to the County connections, which, together with new crosswalks, work to provide a safe, convenient, and pleasant waterfront route for all users. (See Figure 14, Beach and Bluff Conceptual Improvement Plan, in Chapter 4)

Nobi Point and Woodyard

Both bluff overlook areas offer excellent opportunities to appreciate uninterrupted scenic vistas of marine life, the rural waterfront landscape, and harbor. Nobi Point, the eastern overlook, will be an auto-oriented scenic overlook with amenities geared toward motor vehicle visitors. Although this area should be primarily dedicated to oceanfront viewing, it may conceivably be used to augment Lighthouse parking and staging needs. Woodyard, the western overlook, will be a pedestrian and bike-oriented waterfront destination and will serve as a gateway between upland properties at Harbor Terrace and the sandy beaches. The overlook should be developed as a mini-park with some complementary amenities including benches, picnic tables, and interpretive exhibits. Both areas may occasionally be used for special events such as art shows, marine environmental exhibitions, etc.

Olde Port Beach and Fisherman's Beaches

The two sandy beaches are comfortable settings for waterfront leisure activities. The beach continues to be a popular small boat launching spot and is appreciated by many for the relatively uncrowded conditions. Both beaches are easily accessible by several different approaches. In addition to the small boat ramp there are stairways, a handicap ramp, and informal paths down the length of the bluffs to serve beach visitors. As usage increases and /or as visitor uses are developed on Harbor Terrace, new stairways will provide additional beach accessways from the bluff tops.

Cal Poly Pier

The Cal Poly Pier will continue to function as a University marine research and education facility. While the public will have some opportunities to visit the facility, the times and conditions of public access are subject to an arrangement between Cal Poly and the Coastal Commission.



A lone fisherman enjoys the solitude of the rocky shoreline by Cal Poly Pier.



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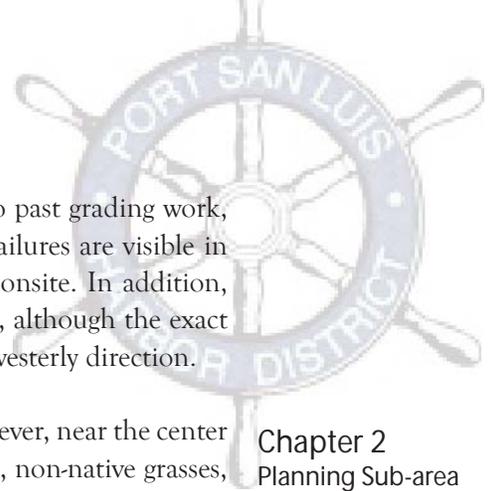
5. Harbor Terrace

Today...

Harbor Terrace is a coastal hillside property facing San Luis Bay and the Pacific Ocean, north and east of the intersection of Avila Beach Drive and Diablo Canyon Road. The site is surrounded on three sides by privately held vacant undeveloped land and provides a visual backdrop for views from San Luis Bay, Harford Pier, vantage points at Avila Beach, and the Pacific Ocean.

The site and surrounding areas comprise lands once owned by the Marre family. Originally, Harbor Terrace consisted of rolling hills that sloped in a southerly direction. Union Oil Company graded the site in the 1930's for storage of crude oil in aboveground oil storage tanks. In 1973, the site was graded for the proposed Port San Luis Marina Village, a project that was never completed. The Harbor District purchased twenty-three acres of the site with funding from the State Department of Boating and Waterways in 1976 to develop uses that could generate additional revenues for the District and provide needed site area for harbor facilities. In 1980, six acres were added through a long-term lease agreement. The Harbor District has investigated numerous ideas for the development of the property but none have been achieved. The chief constraints of previous proposals were poor financial return, opposition from the community, and plans for too intensive development under the then-existing land use plans. After acquiring additional leases, the site is now approximately 30-acres.

Harbor Terrace provides area for storage of Harbor District materials, trailer storage, boat storage, and boaters' gear storage. Another prominent feature on the site is the 100,000-gallon water tank located at the northern boundary of the site, which provides for the Harbor District's water storage (Figure 8). The Port San Luis Trailer Park property occupies approximately three acres off Babe Lane, a narrow paved road that winds up the eastern part of the site.



A series of relatively level benches and roadways ascend the hillside. Due to past grading work, slopes between the terraces are very steep in some areas and minor slope failures are visible in several locations. Slope stability is tenuous, with five landslides identified onsite. In addition, there are numerous slumps and smaller slides throughout the property and, although the exact location is unknown, the San Luis Bay fault crosses the property in a northwesterly direction.

Vegetation on Harbor Terrace is sparse, largely due to previous grading. However, near the center of the site is a grove of eucalyptus trees, and in areas not exposed to grading, non-native grasses, coastal sage scrub and oak woodlands have also been established.

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Tomorrow...

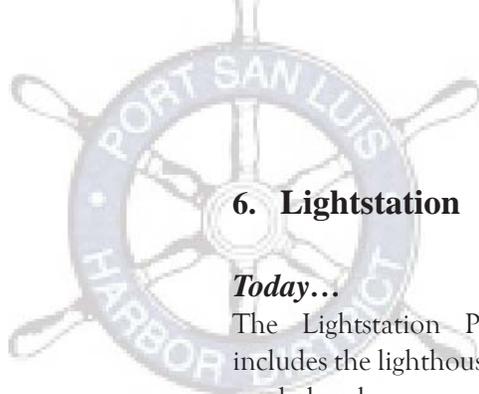
The Port is uniquely situated to create a legacy coastal development project at Harbor Terrace. The vision for this site is to facilitate development of complementary harbor uses in a way that highlights the natural beauty of the setting with the maritime charm of the Port and environmental sensitivity. The site has abundant development potential, with panoramic views of the ocean and coastal hillsides and a location within walking distance of dozens of recreational activities. The Port should acquire available surrounding parcels to take advantage of opportunities to enhance the site's natural assets and location. This project will serve the needs of current and future coastal dependent users and enhance public enjoyment of the harbor. (See Figure 15, Harbor Terrace Conceptual Improvement Plan, in Chapter 4.)

The vision for Harbor Terrace is to facilitate development of complementary harbor uses in a way that highlights the natural beauty of the setting with the maritime charm of the Port and environmental sensitivity.

Harbor Terrace should provide overnight accommodations that emphasize its special setting and coastal environment and should help to meet the unmet need for visitor facilities in this area. Harbor Terrace should be available to visitors of a wide range of incomes. Development should include a creative mix of camping options such as tent, bike, and RV camping, along with cabins or bungalows. Other related facilities such as a park or open space area and mixed-use commissary that includes a general store and restaurant should be provided on the site to serve visitors. Harbor Terrace should also accommodate overflow parking and Lighthouse parking needs.

Special treatment may be necessary to address visual, geologic, and other site constraints. One desirable approach is the integration of environmentally friendly or innovative site treatment which can be used to accent innovative design solutions and, if emphasized in interpretive exhibits and demonstration sites, could add to the project's distinction and appeal.

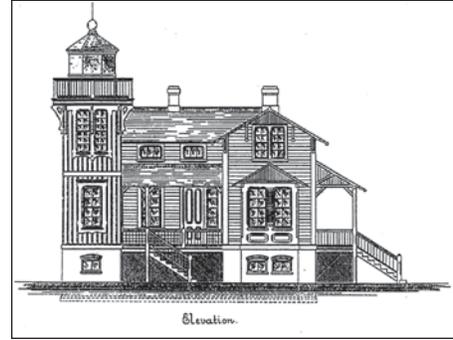
The site should assemble uses that increase visitor-serving opportunities together with complementary harbor facilities. Harbor uses such as the administrative operations, boat and gear storage, and parking should be thoughtfully integrated to create a compatible relationship between uses, views, and environmental conditions of the site. Additionally, it is important that the design of Harbor Terrace functionally integrate onsite uses with those in other areas of the harbor to promote balanced distribution of resources and facilities. Coordination of uses will help to create a distinctive and harmonious waterfront project for generations.



6. Lightstation

Today...

The Lightstation Planning Sub-Area (Figure 9) includes the lighthouse facilities at Point San Luis, the sandy beach area on the east side of the breakwater, and the rocky inter-tidal areas between the Lighthouse and Harford Pier. The Coast Guard lighthouse facility at Point San Luis was constructed in 1890 as one of seven lighthouses built in California in the same architectural style. Today, there are only two remaining Victorian Lighthouses on the West Coast: Port San Luis and East Brother in San Pablo Bay.



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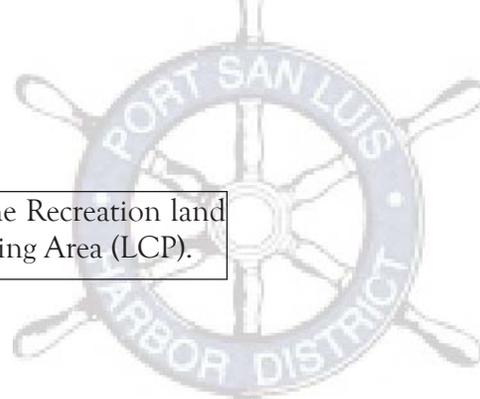
The lighthouse site consists of the lighthouse building, whistle house, coal house, oil house, two duplexes, two large underground cisterns, and various outbuildings, most of which date from the formative period (1888-1890). In 1974, the Coast Guard automated the lightstation and in 1992 the Port acquired the 30-acre site from the Federal Government with the condition to restore and open the station to the public. In 1995, the Point San Luis Lighthouse Keepers non-profit corporation formed to take on responsibility for restoration and operation of the lighthouse. A Memorandum of Agreement between the Harbor District and the Lighthouse Keepers imparts the group with funding responsibility for the property.

Tomorrow...

In 2000, the Lighthouse Keepers unveiled their Historic Structures Report and Treatment Plan for the restoration, operation, and maintenance of the Station. The goal is to return the complex to an authentic appearance and condition to enhance the educational and recreational values of the historic facility. Numerous projects are currently underway including restoration of the buildings and landscaping, improvements to the utility systems, access routes, and the surrounding grounds. Interpretive displays, picnic areas, meeting rooms, and restrooms will also be integrated. The Lighthouse Driveway, which is controlled by the local utility company and originates at the Diablo Canyon power plant access road, should be improved to provide limited vehicle access to the Lighthouse. In addition, access to the Lighthouse site may be improved by replacing the historic pier at its former location near Lighthouse Beach. Waterborne access may not only enhance visitor's experiences of the Lightstation but may also be more cost effective. (See Figure 16, Lighthouse Conceptual Improvement Plan in Chapter 4, and the Point San Luis Treatment Plan published under separate cover.)

Point San Luis
Lighthouse (2002)





RECREATION The following descriptions are for properties in the Recreation land use category of the County of San Luis Obispo's San Luis Bay Planning Area (LCP).

7. Avila Beach, Pier, and Parking Lot

Today...

Avila Beach has traditionally been closely linked with Port San Luis. The first residents of Avila Beach were a rather large community of Chumash Indians whose villages at this site are believed to have been the center of the Northern Chumash tribe, with boundaries extending from Point Sal to San Carpoforo Creek. Excavations under the present site of the San Luis Bay Inn revealed occupation by these early Americans dating back over 5,000 years.

The modern history of Avila Beach could be said to have begun with construction of People's Wharf in 1869, an 1,800-ft. pier, originally located about a city block south of the present Avila Pier. This pier included a narrow-gauge railroad from the end of the pier to a warehouse in Avila Beach. People's Wharf played an important role in the early commerce of San Luis Obispo County until its destruction in a major storm in January 1878.

The community of Avila Beach was founded in July, 1874 by sons of Don Miguel Avila, heirs to the original Rancho San Miguelito Mexican land grant which extended from San Luis Bay north to the present-day limits of San Luis Obispo. In 1984, the Harbor District assumed ownership from the State of California of Avila Beach, Avila Pier, and from the County of San Luis Obispo the public parking lot north of First Street and west of San Miguel Street. In the late 1990's, the beachfront commercial district was demolished to clean up oil contamination that had accumulated during a long history of oil industry activity. The entire cleaned up area is currently being rebuilt. The affected Port properties were rebuilt to include new accessways, lifeguard station, restrooms, base of Avila Pier, scenic overlooks, stepped seating, and all new sand for a clean beach. Additionally, the San Luis Yacht Club which dates back to 1937, was temporarily relocated and moved back onto a rebuilt section of the pier. The public parking lot was also rebuilt incorporating innovative clean drainage systems.

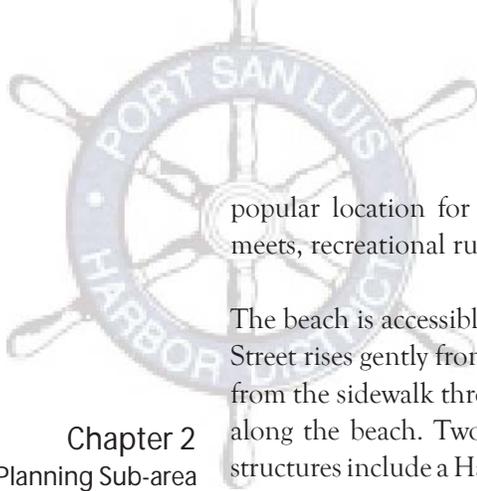
Avila Beach is one of the primary recreation and tourist destinations in San Luis Obispo County. The community of Avila Beach presently consists of about 400 permanent residents, but the population swells by an influx of up to 1 million annual visitors (Avila Beach Specific Plan, 2001). The primary route to the Avila Community is Avila Beach Drive, maintained and managed by the County of San Luis Obispo. Recent circulation studies indicate that this route will experience congested traffic conditions in the future and during peak tourist periods, typically summertime weekends (Avila Circulation Study, 2001).

Avila Beach

Avila Beach is approximately 14 acres and extends from the mouth of San Luis Obispo Creek on the west to Pirates Cove on the east. The beach here is widely known as the warmest and most wind-sheltered in the County. Typical activities on Avila Beach include sunbathing, sightseeing, picnicking, volleyball, swimming, surfing, kite-flying, and similar activities. Avila Beach is a

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Avila Beach is widely known as the warmest and most wind-sheltered beach in the County.



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popular location for local organizations to sponsor events including company picnics, swim meets, recreational runs, and beach volleyball tournaments.

The beach is accessible from virtually at grade with Front Street along its western end, but Front Street rises gently from west to east until it stands over 30 feet above the sand. Stairways descend from the sidewalk through a concrete sea wall along Front Street to the beach at eleven locations along the beach. Two universal access handicap ramps also descend to the beach. Permanent structures include a Harbor District Lifeguard office with adjoining restrooms on the pier, outdoor shower, and storage at the base of the pier, as well as the San Luis Yacht Club building on the pier. At the west end of the beach across from the park, a drainage outfall structure was designed to incorporate a handicap ramp, stairs, and outdoors showers. Port San Luis maintains playground equipment, barbecue grills, and picnic tables along the western section of the beach.

Avila Pier

San Luis Obispo County constructed the present-day Avila Pier in 1908, shortly after construction of the breakwater at Point San Luis. Originally, the pier contained a large warehouse and several hoists, and was an important fishing and passenger wharf. The pier suffered major storm damage in 1953, 1955, 1960, 1969, 1973, and again in March 1983, just before the transfer of ownership of Avila Beach and properties from the State and County to the Harbor District in 1984. The Harbor District rebuilt and renovated the pier, which is an important part of the landscape and environment of Avila Beach (See Figure 11).

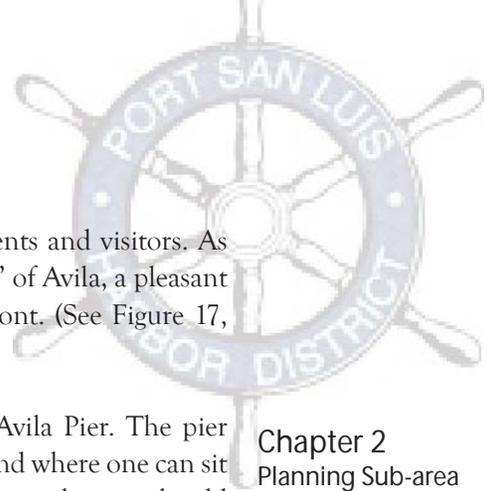


Residents and visitors continue to enjoy the pleasant waterfront at Avila Beach.

The pier is approximately 1,635 feet in length, and is about 30' wide at the base, 20' wide along the stem, and 60' wide for the last 200'. Boating facilities include a hoist, and under the pier, skiff tie-ups and a public landing. Avila Pier is a public fishing pier and, along the length of the pier on three sides, incorporates 10-foot setbacks to any structures. The primary uses of the pier are public fishing, sightseeing, and boat access. Structures on the pier include the historic yacht club at the base of the pier, as well as a public restroom, lifeguard station, bait and tackle shop, and fish cleaning station on the pier's terminus. In tourist season, vendors sell food and drinks from mobile carts.

Avila Parking Lot

The Avila Beach Parking Lot (See Figure 10) sits one block from the beach. It is roughly triangular and was redesigned and rebuilt by Unocal during the Avila Beach restoration to provide 353 parking spaces. According to a deed restriction with the County, the Port must provide at least 300 public parking spaces in this lot to serve beach and pier users. The County owns a right of way through the center of the lot. During peak summer months the lot is heavily used by beach goers and patrons of nearby shops and businesses.



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Avila will continue to be a popular recreational destination for local residents and visitors. As the community rebuilds, the beach area will continue to be the “front porch” of Avila, a pleasant place to take a break, visit with friends, and take advantage of the waterfront. (See Figure 17, Avila Pier Conceptual Improvement Plan in Chapter 4.)

Local residents and visitors will continue to enjoy the setting offered by Avila Pier. The pier terminus is an open space destination where offshore views are uncluttered and where one can sit and observe the water, marine life, and offshore activities. New development on the pier should be limited to the pier terminus. The Harbor District reserves new uses for coastal dependent, visitor serving, and recreational uses that complement pier activities. Employing a combination of open deck space and building mass and incorporating sensitive design and materials will reduce the visual intrusion that may be caused by new uses.

The Pier will offer increased recreational boating facilities at the terminus including a new landing, skiff racks, and skiff tie-ups. These improvements will enhance boating access at this end of the Bay and may stimulate new boating-oriented uses. The new landing will accommodate larger vessels to facilitate water-oriented visitor uses such as harbor excursions, water-borne access to the Lighthouse, or dinner cruises. The skiff facilities provide access to boats on moorings and in the anchorage for Avila residents, visitors, and yacht club members. Pier enhancements such as benches and picnic tables, and interpretive exhibits on the marine life of San Luis Obispo Bay, will create a comfortable and user-friendly pier environment.

The Avila Beach Parking Lot will continue to provide parking to support visitors to the Avila Beach and Pier, using parking lot revenues for beach maintenance and operations (See Figure 17, Avila Beach Parking Lot, in Chapter 4). Although it is not the preferred parking arrangement, the lot may serve as an off-season (winter) staging area for Lighthouse parking needs. Also during off-season periods, the Port may consider allowing the community to use the lot for Special Events. In the interest of completing the street frontage along First Street and increasing revenue generating opportunities, the Port may consider removing parking spaces in this part of the lot (consistent with its agreement with the County) for lease space. Per the Avila Specific Plan, the frontage along First Street would be well suited for development of vacation type units. The Port may consider using this space for development of commercial or visitor-serving transient units as a revenue generator to offset the costs of the beach and pier expenses.



Strolling along the wooden Avila Pier.

