

# Public Access Element — Recommended Edits

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**Policy C-WR-1n:** Remove abandoned, deteriorated piers and associated buildings in Bodega Bay, particularly those within the alignment of future trails. Consider preserving portions of these structures **so they** may remain if they provide coastal access and can be maintained in safe condition.

**Quality of Destination.** The desirability and capacity of coastal destinations are important considerations in locating public access points. Areas with few attractions and limited space may not justify the cost of development and operation. However, as the population expands and overuse **threatens to impact** ~~impacts~~ the existing destinations, the importance of **carefully managing** every potential public access point increases.

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**Peak Use.** Peak use issues can be addressed through a variety of approaches. Visitors can be encouraged to use Sonoma County Transit, Mendocino County Transit, and carpool, reducing the need for new parking areas (see California Coastal Act Section 30252.1). Interpretive materials and programs can be provided to help connect visitors with lightly used access points they may not have known about such as Shorttail Gulch or Bodega Dunes Beach that provide alternatives to crowded locations such as Doran Beach or Salmon Creek Beach. Completion of the California Coastal Trail will connect most access points, allowing visitors to park wherever parking is available and use the trail to reach their preferred access point. **A parking reservation system could be developed with advisories that alert visitors when parking is unavailable at particular locations.** Heavy use at particular access points can be distributed by creating additional trails with coastal views on parkland east of State Highway 1. The Dr. Joseph Trail (Pomo Trail) is a good illustration of a popular trail with coastal views east of the highway. Measures to address use patterns at specific access points are in the Public Access Plan.

**Parking.** Outside of the developed area of Bodega Bay, parking along State Highway 1 is primarily used by visitors accessing the coast. **Availability of parking** ~~Parking management influences~~ **congestion on** ~~the capacity of~~ Highway 1 **on high-visitor days.** ~~Traffic must since visitors~~ **search** ~~searching for parking spaces~~ **at** ~~and the numerous parking lots and turnouts tend~~

to slow traffic. Between Bodega Bay and Jenner, State Highway 1 is adjacent to the Sonoma Coast State Beaches. Roadside parking in this area **often creates dangerous conditions for cyclists and pedestrians, and interferes with ambulances and other emergency vehicles.** ~~is heavy and often supported by paved, striped parking lots.~~ North of Jenner Russian Gulch and Vista Trail provide the only off **highway** ~~road~~ parking, although there are numerous small turnouts. Further north, Fort Ross State Historic Park, Stillwater Cove Regional Park, and Salt Point State Park provide some off-highway parking for developed park areas only. Gualala Point Regional Park and The Sea Ranch Coastal Access Trails all have offhighway parking.

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Parking improvements ~~needed~~ on the Sonoma County coast **must be carefully designed to prevent overcrowding of sensitive areas, and** ~~include developing new and enlarging existing parking facilities~~ to reduce hazardous parallel parking, improving signs and entrances to and exits from parking facilities, and **managing** ~~increasing~~ capacity by delineating parking spaces. Parking improvements are most needed in the Sonoma Coast State Park area between Bodega Bay and North Jenner Beach, where traffic levels and demand for parking spaces are greatest. The Public Access Plan recommends parking improvements for various access points.

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### ***Development Review***

Policy C-PA-3c: Consider alternative mitigation measures for the impact of new development on public access in cases where development of certain public access facilities or improvements are found to be infeasible due to potentially significant impacts on public safety, agriculture, Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas, or cultural resources. Alternative mitigation measures include but are not limited to development of off-site public access points of equivalent public access opportunities. If off-site public access points are developed as mitigation for the impact of new development on public access, these access points shall be as close as feasible to the location of the impact on public access. Feasible is defined here as “capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a **decade** ~~reasonable period of time~~, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.” (NEW)

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**GOAL C-PA-4:** Establish a parking systems that recognize the limitations of State Route 1, which has only two lanes. Provide parking areas that distribute visitors so as to avoid overcrowding and minimize parking on the shoulder of roads, while serving ~~with adequate parking facilities for~~ parkland visitors throughout the Sonoma County coast, with minimal impacts on views, public safety, and natural resources.

**Objective C-PA-4.1:** Ensure that adequate parking facilities are provided for each new or expanded public access facility.

**Objective C-PA-4.2:** Identify, prioritize, and implement parking improvements at parklands.

The following policies, in addition to policies in the Circulation and Transit Element, shall be used to achieve these objectives:

### ***Locating and Developing Parking Improvements***

**Policy C-PA-4a:** Encourage new parking facilities in conjunction with development of new public access facilities. Parking may be developed in phases as use levels increase. At public access facilities, provide the maximum parking capacity that does not exceed the capacity of State Route 1 on high visitor days, reduce public safety or significantly impact the environment. (NEW)

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**Policy C-PA-4b:** Locate parking areas to directly connect with trails if possible. In locating new, ~~large~~ parking lots for more than ten vehicles, consider the landward (east) side of State Highway 1 to reduce impacts to ocean views if safe trail crossings of the highway can be provided. (NEW)

### ***Facilitate Access for All***

**Policy C-PA-4d:** Maintain and provide free or affordable parking for low-income visitors, ~~subject to reasonable restrictions,~~ at all public access points on the coast which do not contain special facilities other than ~~in excess of~~ restrooms, parking, gated access, trash enclosures, informational kiosks, and other minor amenities. If ~~Where~~ user fees are charged implemented for any coastal park areas, provide encourage discounts to low-income County residents. (NEW GP2020 REVISED)

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### **Private Fee Access**

A few landowners charge minimal day use access fees that permit the general public the opportunity to reach the shoreline. By controlling access by fee and location, the property owner can operate trails, parking, and boat launching in a manner that affords minimum interference with other land uses. Unfortunately, several of these access points have been closed. The Public Access Plan encourages owners of fee access ways to continue to provide access to the public, **and to provide discounts for low-income visitors**. Private fee accessways require a Coastal Permit and can be subject to sanitary, parking, and other conditions similar to those applied to public accessways.

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**Policy C-PA-5c:** When new recreation facilities are proposed, **asses require** proposed staffing plans to ensure adequate staffing for maintenance and security. (NEW)