Section 1.0
INTRODUCTION

The Highway 101 Corridor Specific Plan is a plan for physical development and redevelopment of this important roadway area that defines Solana Beach. The Plan provides a set of guidelines and regulations for directing development within the 163-acre project area. Figure 1-1 illustrates the Specific Plan area.

This Specific Plan has been prepared in accordance with State specific plan requirements as described in Sections 65450 through 65457 of California Planning and Zoning Law. According to these sections, a Specific Plan must identify:

- The distribution, location and extent of land use
- The proposed distribution, location, extent and intensity of major components of infrastructure (transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, and energy) to be located within the area covered by the Plan and needed to support the land uses described in the Plan
- The standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and standards for conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, where applicable
- Provide implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures

Land use characteristics and infrastructure of the Specific Plan are described in Section 3.0 – Development Plan. Standards and criteria for area development are discussed in Section 2.0 – Urban Design Program, Section 4.0 – Development Standards, and Section 5.0 – Design Guidelines. Specific Plan implementation measures are discussed at the end of this Section 1.0 – Introduction.
This 1991 graphic shows originally approved phased improvements subsequently excluded from the Master Plan in 2001. References to “New Cross Street,” closing “cul-de-sacs” North Cedros, and/or relocating parking from the Plaza have not been approved and remain for historical purposes.
1.1 Purpose of the Specific Plan

The purpose of the Specific Plan is to provide for new development and redevelopment to achieve a physical environment along the Highway 101 corridor that is cohesive and representative of the unique character of Solana Beach. Members of the community who participated in development of the Specific Plan shared a vision of revitalizing the Plaza, Beach Park and the Highway 101 corridor as the heart or downtown of Solana Beach.

The Specific Plan area represents both the traditional focus of the community and an area of distinct opportunity. It offers the setting to create a town heart which combines open space, the beach, community facilities, residential neighborhoods, retail businesses, and transit access in a way that will be a source of pride and economic benefit for the community.

People who live in Solana Beach want to see the heart of the community as a source of pride. The Plaza can be a place to eat, stroll, sit at the beach, shop, watch the sunset, and celebrate community events and festivals. The Highway 101 gateways to Solana Beach and approaches to the downtown can have a parkway character, including attractive landscaped retail and office areas, as well as a linear park in the existing rail right-of-way east of Highway 101.

The Specific Plan area can have a cohesiveness that unites the residential and commercial neighborhoods with the Plaza, but also protects the identity of individual districts. At the same time, pressures for development which conflicts or differs with the vision of this Specific Plan will be great. The City and community should remain flexible about change and refinement, while retaining the vision for this important area.

1.2 Origin of the Specific Plan

The Highway 101 Corridor Specific Plan developed from:

- General Plan implementation directives
- The Highway 101 and Plaza public design workshop
- The Highway 101 Corridor Specific Plan Background Report
- Input from the Highway 101 Corridor Specific Plan Committee, City Council and City staff
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General Plan Directives

The Solana Beach General Plan Land Use Element, Objective 2.0, establishes a basis of need for specific development standards for the Highway 101 and Cedros Avenue areas. The objective is to strengthen the City’s economic base and offer a range of commercial enterprises to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

Public Design Workshop

The Highway 101 and Plaza public design workshop was conducted by a consultant (The Spurlock Office) and the City. About 50 community members attended, including property owners, business owners, residents, and others. The Mayor and City Council members attended as observers, while City staff coordinated the workshop and provided background information. The workshop goals established for the Specific Plan area were:

- Implement the General Plan with more detailed analysis and design
- Assess and document the community’s objectives and preferences for area land use, physical character, and area improvement implementation techniques
- Provide a planning concept (vision) for the corridor and Plaza
- Create a pedestrian-oriented heart for Solana Beach
- Improve the physical appearance and sense of community identity of the Highway 101 corridor
- Resolve the market and traffic issues in the corridor

Specific Plan Background Report

The Specific Plan Background Report was prepared to document existing conditions within the Plan area. The report was prepared by the Plan consultant team – Cotton/Beland/Associates (Urban Planning and Environmental), The Spurlock Office (Landscape Architecture), Visions (Architecture), and Natelson Levander Whitney (Economic Market Analysis).

This report contains an inventory of existing conditions for the Plan area and includes such topics as: land use, zoning regulations, traffic/circulation, architectural and landscape character, and economic market conditions. Opportunities and constraints within the Plan area are also described.

Specific Plan Committee

The Specific Plan Committee was comprised of six individuals, each appointed by either the Mayor or a City Council member. The Committee members met with the Specific Plan consultant team on five occasions to identify a “vision” for the area based on general concepts associated with physical development. The consultant team provided a range of visionary objectives for the area from which the Committee selected preferences. The following describes the consensus reached regarding concepts and their priority for the area:
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- Protect local businesses, maintain neighborhood community/commercial base
- Encourage walking and pedestrian orientation
- Maintain the existing scale of structures
- Provide a unifying theme for the Fletcher Cove Beach Park, train station, and Plaza area
- Maximize open space
- Provide centralized parking

1.3 Specific Plan Districts

The Specific Plan area is located in the coastal portion of Solana Beach. The historical coastal route, Highway 101, serves as the backbone of the Plan area. The 163-acre Plan area stretches from the City’s northern boundary at San Elijo Lagoon to the southerly City limits at Via de la Valle. Rios Avenue is the easternmost boundary, while the Fletcher Cove Beach Park represents the westernmost boundary of the Plan area.

The Plan area is divided into five sub-areas referred to as districts. Figure 1-2 depicts the location of each district:

- North 101
- North Cedros
- Plaza
- South 101/South Sierra
- South Cedros
Figure 1-2
Specific Plan Districts
1.4 Relationship to Other Plans and Jurisdictions

The Specific Plan is influenced by a variety of jurisdictional plans. In addition to the Solana Beach General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, the California Coastal Commission controls development activities occurring in the area.

General Plan

The Specific Plan carries out the goals and objectives of the Solana Beach General Plan through its identification of a development plan which complements General Plan policy, while implementing area-specific development standards and design guidelines. The General Plan establishes land use locations and development policies on a City-wide basis, while the Specific Plan implements the goals and policies of the General Plan by establishing standards and design guidelines which enable the area to develop in a complementary harmonious manner. General Plan land use designations applicable to the Specific Plan area are identified in Figure 1-3.

Zoning Ordinance

The City Zoning Ordinance functions as the development code for Solana Beach. The Specific Plan and the Zoning Ordinance are designed to work together in the Highway 101 corridor to implement General Plan policy for this area. As such, certain development standards contained in the Specific Plan are tailored to the unique character of the Highway 101 corridor and supersede those contained in the Zoning Ordinance. For other standards, the Specific Plan refers directly to those contained in the Zoning Ordinance. Development standards are contained in Section 4.0 of the Plan.

The Zoning Ordinance also includes definitions of technical terms that apply to terms used in the Specific Plan.

Coastal Regulations

The Plan area is located within the Coastal Zone as defined by the California Coastal Act of 1976. The City of Solana Beach has not adopted a Local Coastal Program; therefore, all coastal permit review is conducted by the Office of the California Coastal Commission. In its review of coastal development proposed in Solana Beach, the Coastal Commission staff utilizes the San Dieguito Planning Area Local Coastal Program Guide prepared by the County of San Diego prior to City incorporation. The City utilizes Chapter 17.62 of its Zoning Ordinance to regulate development occurring on beaches, bluffs and land areas immediately landward of the coastline. These regulations are intended to protect the public interest in maintaining the coastline as a unique recreational and scenic resource, and avoid economic dislocations and safety hazards of coastal erosion.
1.5 Specific Plan Implementation

Implementation of the Highway 101 Corridor Specific Plan involves actions by both the City of Solana Beach and property owners within the Plan area. This section describes actions to be taken to implement the Specific Plan.

Adoption by Ordinance

The Solana Beach City Council adopted the Highway 101 Corridor Specific Plan by ordinance. A copy of the ordinance appears at the beginning of this document.

General Plan

The Specific Plan is consistent with the Solana Beach General Plan.

Project Approvals

The review process for individual development projects is to ensure compliance with the Specific Plan. Once the Community Development Department has determined that a proposed project is consistent with the Specific Plan, the project applications shall be processed in accordance with provisions contained within the City Zoning Ordinance and other ordinances. No building permit, local public work, discretionary permit, or subdivision map may be approved and no zoning ordinance may be adopted or amended unless the City Council or other decision maker exercising discretion delegated by the City Council finds that the permit, work, map or ordinance is consistent with the Specific Plan.

Submittal

The applicant for a proposed project within the Specific Plan area is responsible for providing enough information to the City of Solana Beach to enable a determination of whether a project is consistent with the Specific Plan. Exact submittal requirements will be identified by the City Community Development Department; however, the submittal must include a written project description demonstrating that the project does not exceed the development standards established in the Specific Plan and describing the following:

- How the architecture of the building(s) restates or interprets the applicable district design concept intent
- How the project carries out the Specific Plan area-wide design concept
- How the project landscaping and walkways connect to adjacent areas
- That the floor area ratio is within the range established by the Specific Plan
- That the uses are consistent with the uses allowed in the district
Amendments to the Specific Plan

All proposed amendments to the Specific Plan shall be processed and acted upon pursuant to the provisions of Section 65453 of the California Planning and Zoning Law.

Specific Plan Review

The Specific Plan should be comprehensively reviewed by the City of Solana Beach every five years to determine if any amendment of the Plan is needed.