Chapter 7

Adaptation Strategies

Chapters 5 and 6 provide guidance on the sequential processes for addressing sea level rise in Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) and Coastal Development Permits (CDPs). This chapter describes some of the specific adaptation strategies to consider in these planning and development review processes. Given the range of impacts that could occur as a result of sea level rise, and the uncertainties surrounding projections of sea level rise over the lifetimes of many coastal projects, communities, planners, coastal managers and project applicants will need to use adaptation strategies to effectively address coastal hazard risks, and protect coastal resources over time.

As described in Chapters 5 and 6, adaptation strategies should be chosen based on the specific risks and vulnerabilities of a region or project site and the applicable Coastal Act and LCP requirements, with due consideration of local priorities and goals. Adaptation strategies may involve modifications to land use plans, regulatory changes, project modifications, or permit conditions that focus on avoidance or minimization of risks and the protection of coastal resources.

Some adaptation strategies may require land use plans or proposed projects to anticipate longer-run impacts now, such as assuring that critical infrastructure is built to last a long time without being put in danger, or rezoning hazardous areas as open space. Other adaptation strategies may build adaptive capacity into the plan or project itself, so that future changes in hazard risks can be effectively addressed while ensuring long-term resource protection. In most cases, especially for LCP land use and implementation plans, multiple adaptation strategies will need to be employed. For projects, adaptation strategies may be addressed through initial siting and design and through conditions that provide for specific adaptation over time.

The next sections provide an overview of the general categories of adaptation options, followed by a description of various specific adaptation strategies organized by type of coastal resource, as outlined in Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act.

The adaptation options described in this chapter are intended to provide guidance for potential LCP and permitting strategies. Not all strategies listed here will be appropriate for every jurisdiction, nor is this an exhaustive list of options. However, as described in Chapters 5 and 6, all local governments and all project applicants should analyze the possible effects of sea level rise and evaluate how the strategies in this chapter, or additional supplemental strategies, could be implemented in LCPs or CDPs to minimize the adverse effects of sea level rise.

General Adaptation Categories

There are a number of options for how to address the risks and impacts associated with sea level rise. Choosing to “do nothing” or following a policy of “non-intervention” may be considered an adaptive response, but in most cases, the strategies for addressing sea level rise hazards will require proactive planning to ensure protection of coastal resources and development. Such proactive adaptation strategies generally fall into three main categories: protect, accommodate, and retreat.

For purposes of implementing the Coastal Act, no single category or even specific strategy should be considered the “best” option as a rule. Different types of strategies will be appropriate in different locations and for different hazard management and resource protection goals. The effectiveness of different adaptation strategies will vary across both spatial and temporal scales. In many cases, a hybrid approach that uses strategies from multiple categories will be necessary,

and the suite of strategies chosen may need to change over time. As discussed later in the document, the legal context of various options will also need to be considered in each situation and ultimately, adaptive responses will need to be consistent with the Coastal Act. Nonetheless, it is useful to think about the general categories of adaptation strategies to help frame the consideration of land use planning and regulatory options in specific communities and places along the coast.

Protect: Protection strategies refer to those strategies that employ some sort of engineered structure or other measure to defend development (or other resources) in its current location without changes to the development itself. Protection strategies can be further divided into "hard" and "soft" defensive measures or armoring. "Hard" armoring refers to engineered structures such as seawalls, revetments, and bulkheads that defend against coastal hazards like wave impacts, erosion, and flooding. Such armoring is a fairly common response to coastal hazards, but it can result in serious negative impacts to coastal resources, particularly as sea level rises. Most significantly, hard structures form barriers that impede the ability of natural beaches and habitats to migrate inland over time. If they are unable to move inland, public recreational beaches, wetlands, and other habitats will be lost as sea level continues to rise. This process is commonly referred to as "passive erosion," which is the narrowing of beaches due to the fact that the back of the beach on an eroding shoreline has been fixed in place (Flick *et al*. 2012). Other detrimental impacts may include negative visual impacts or interference with other ecosystem services.

Figure 15. Photo depicting passive erosion. (*Left*) Passive erosion in front of a revetment at Fort Ord, illustrating the loss of beach where the development prevents the shoreline from migrating landward. The beach continues to migrate inland on either side of the revetment. (*Right*) Recovery of the beach following removal of the revetment and blufftop structure. (*Source: California Coastal Records Project*).

"Soft" armoring refers to the use of natural or "green" infrastructure like beaches, dune systems, wetlands, and other systems to buffer coastal areas. Strategies like beach nourishment, dune management, or the construction of "living shorelines" capitalize on the natural ability of these systems to protect coastlines from coastal hazards while also providing benefits such as habitat, recreation area, more pleasing visual impacts, and the continuation or enhancement of ecosystem services. The engineering of green infrastructure is a somewhat newer concept in some cases, and because of this, the effectiveness of different strategies in different types of environments is not necessarily well-known or tested. In cases in which natural infrastructure might not be

completely effective or may not be preferred, a hybrid approach using both hard and natural infrastructure could be considered. As described in Principle 10 of this Guidance and in the *Safeguarding California* plan (CNRA 2014), priority should be given to options that protect, enhance, and maximize coastal resources and access, including giving full consideration to innovative nature-based approaches such as living shoreline techniques or managed/planned retreat. Although the Coastal Act clearly provides for potential protection strategies for "existing development", it also directs that new development be sited and designed to not require future protection that may alter a natural shoreline.

Accommodate: Accommodation strategies refer to those strategies that employ methods that modify existing developments or design new developments to decrease hazard risks and thus increase the resiliency of development to the impacts of sea level rise. On an individual project scale, these accommodation strategies include actions such as elevating structures, retrofits and/or the use of materials meant to increase the strength of development, building structures that can easily be moved and relocated, or using extra setbacks. On a community-scale, accommodation strategies include any of the land use designations, zoning ordinances, or other measures that require the above types of actions, as well as strategies such as clustering development in less vulnerable areas or requiring mitigation actions to provide for protection of natural areas even as development is protected. As with protection strategies, some accommodation strategies could result in negative impacts to coastal resources. Elevated structures may block coastal views or detract from community character; pile-supported structures may, through erosion, develop into a form of shore protection that interferes with coastal processes, blocks access, and, at the extreme, results in structures looming over or directly on top of the beach.

Figure 16. Photo depicting "managed retreat" and restoration. Surfers' Point Managed Shoreline Retreat project in which the parking lot was moved back and beach area was restored. (*Aerial composite by Rick Wilborne (February 28, 2013); photo courtesy of Surfrider Foundation*)

Retreat: Retreat strategies are those strategies that relocate or remove existing development out of hazard areas and limit the construction of new development in vulnerable areas. These strategies include land use designations and zoning ordinances that encourage building in more resilient areas or gradually removing and relocating existing development. Acquisition and buy-out programs, transfer of development rights programs, and removal of structures where the right to protection was waived (*i.e.*, via permit condition) are examples of strategies designed to encourage managed retreat.

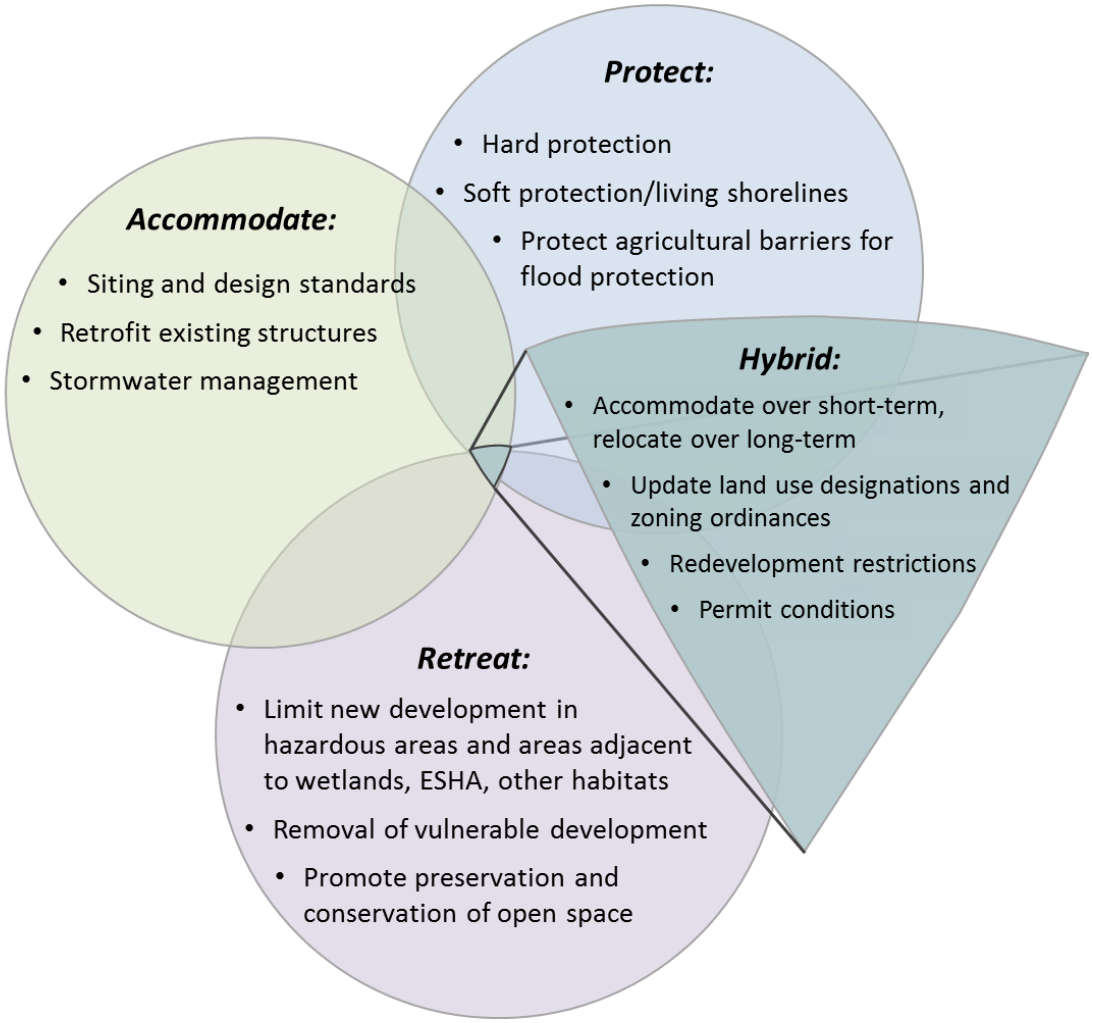

Figure 17. Examples of general adaptation strategies

SPECIFIC ADAPTATION STRATEGIES

The following sections, organized by category of coastal resource, present measures that local governments and coastal planners should consider including in their LCPs or individual CDPs. The purpose of this organization is to allow coastal managers and project applicants to easily find strategies that will help address the specific resource vulnerabilities identified in Steps 1-3 of the LCP and CDP processes laid out in Chapters 5 and 6. In the development of LCP policies, local governments should use adaptation measures that best implement the statewide resource protection and hazard policies of the Coastal Act at the local level given the diverse geography and conditions of different areas.

As part of identifying adaptation strategies, local governments should carefully examine the potential impacts to coastal resources that could occur from various adaptation strategies. Some adaptation strategies will need to be implemented incrementally over time as conditions change, and many strategies will need to be implemented through both the LCP and CDP to be effective. For each issue area, there is a description of potential impacts that could occur due to sea level rise and a list of adaptation tools or actions to minimize impacts. To skip to a topic, click on the links below.

A. Coastal Development and Hazards

B. Public Access and Recreation

C. Coastal Habitats, ESHA, and Wetlands

D. Agricultural Resources

E. Water Quality and Supply

F. Archaeological and Paleontological Resources

G. Scenic and Visual Resources

The lists in these sections should be considered neither checklists from which all options need to be used, nor exhaustive lists of all possible adaptation strategies. Sea level rise adaptation is an evolving field, and policy language, cost considerations, effectiveness of various strategies, and other topics are continuing to be developed. Planners, applicants, and partners will need to think creatively and adaptively respond to changing conditions, new science, and new adaptation opportunities, and the Coastal Commission will continue to support and collaborate on these efforts.

Additionally, sea level rise planning may involve a number of trade-offs among various competing interests, and no single adaptation strategy will be able to accomplish all planning objectives. Economic and social implications of various adaptation options will likely play into the planning process at the local level. The important point is to analyze current and future risks from sea level rise, determine local priorities and goals for protection of coastal resources and development in light of Coastal Act requirements, and identify what land use designations, zoning ordinances, and other adaptation strategies can be used to meet those goals.

A. Coastal Development and Hazards

The Coastal Act requires that new development be sited and designed to be safe from hazards and to not adversely impact coastal resources (Coastal Act Sections 30235 and 30253). The main goals that relate to hazards and coastal development are:

- Update land use designations, zoning maps, and ordinances to account for changing hazard zones
- Include sea level rise in hazard analyses and policies
- Plan and locate new development to be safe from hazards, not require protection over its entire lifespan, and be protective of coastal resources
- Incorporate sea level rise adaptation into redevelopment policies
- Encourage the removal of development that is threatened by sea level rise
- Use "soft" or "natural" solutions as a preferred alternative for protection of existing endangered structures
- Limit bluff and shoreline protective devices to protect existing endangered structures
- Require special considerations for critical infrastructure and facilities
- Protect transportation infrastructure

Chapter 3 of the Guidance covers the impacts to coastal development that might result from sea level rise. Certified LCPs should already have policies and standards to assure that coastal development is safe over its anticipated lifetime and that it does not adversely impact other coastal resources. However, LCP policies and standards may need to be updated in light of new knowledge and to consider sea level rise hazards. Adaptation options have been developed to support the development goals of the Coastal Act through both LCP policies and CDP conditions, and the following strategies cover a range of options for addressing the identified goals of the Coastal Act.

Goal: Update land use designations, zoning maps, and ordinances to account for changing hazard zones

A.1 Establish mapped hazard zones or overlays: Update land uses and zoning requirements to minimize risks from sea level rise in identified hazard zones or overlay areas. For example, limit new development in current and future sea level hazard zones and encourage removal of existing development when threatened.

A.1a **Identify zones that require a more rigorous sea level rise hazards analysis**: Specify areas where a closer analysis of sea level rise is necessary at the permit application stage to avoid or minimize coastal hazards and impacts to coastal

resources. Ensure that the most up-to-date information on sea level rise is incorporated in such analyses.

Goal: Include sea level rise in hazard analyses and policies

A.2 Update policies to require sea level rise to be included in hazard analyses and management plans: LCP policies should include requirements to analyze projected sea level rise. Consider specific projection scenarios to be analyzed. (See Chapter 3 of the Guidance for a description of scenario planning.) LCPs could also specify which analyses are required for various types of projects/development (see Step 2 of Chapters 5 and 6 or Appendix B for suggested analyses).

A.2a **Site-specific evaluation of sea level rise**: Update policies, ordinances, and permit application requirements to include a required site-specific evaluation of coastal hazards due to sea level rise over the full projected life of any proposed development. Analyses should be conducted by a certified Civil Engineer or Engineering Geologist with expertise in coastal processes.

A.2b **Incorporate wave runup zones and sea level rise in coastal flood hazard maps:** Develop coastal flood maps that include areas that will be subject to wave action and flooding due to sea level rise. These maps may be able to rely upon existing flood maps, such as the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps, for current flood areas and base conditions, but should be augmented to include future conditions, including sea level rise, likely to occur through the life of proposed new development.

A.2c **Incorporate sea level rise into calculations of the Geologic Setback Line**: Update geotechnical report requirements for establishing the Geologic Setback Line (bluff setback) to include consideration of bluff retreat due to sea level rise in addition to historic bluff retreat data, future increase in storm or El Niño events, and any known site-specific conditions. The report should be completed by a licensed Geotechnical Engineer or an Engineering Geologist.

A.2d **Include sea level rise in wave runup, storm surge, and tsunami hazard assessments**[44]: Sea level rise should be included in wave runup analyses, including storm event and tsunami hazard assessments. This should include evaluating tsunami loads/currents on maritime facilities and coastal structures. Since tsunami wave runup can be quite large, sea level rise projections of only a few inches may not have a large impact on these assessments. However, for time periods or scenarios where sea level rise projections are large (perhaps 1 ft or more), it would be appropriate to include sea level rise because it could change the results to a significant degree.

[44] Tsunami evacuation maps are based upon current sea level conditions and they will need to be updated with changes in sea level.

A.3 Establish shoreline management plans to address long-term shoreline change due to sea level rise: Create policies that require a management plan for priority areas that are subject to sea level rise hazards, and incorporate the plan into the larger LCP if applicable. Similar to an LCP, shoreline management plans generally include the short and long term goals for the specified area, the management actions and policies necessary for reaching those goals, and any necessary monitoring to ensure effectiveness and success. Incorporate strategies necessary to manage and adapt to changes in wave, flooding, and erosion hazards due to sea level rise.

Goal: Plan and locate new development to be safe from hazards, not require protection over its entire lifespan, and be protective of coastal resources

A.4 Limit new development in hazardous areas: Restrict or limit construction of new development in zones or overlay areas that have been identified or designated as hazardous areas to avoid or minimize impacts to coastal resources and property from sea level rise impacts.

A.5 Cluster development away from hazard areas: Concentrate development away from hazardous areas. Update any existing policies that cluster development to reflect additional hazard zones due to sea level rise.

A.5a **Concentration of development/smart growth**: Require development to concentrate in areas that can accommodate it without significant adverse effects on coastal resources. This strategy is applicable for community wide planning through an LCP, but may also apply to CDPs for subdivisions or for larger developments involving large or multiple lots.

A.5b **Transfer of Development Rights programs (TDR)**: Restrict development in one area ("sending area") and allow for the transfer of development rights to another area more appropriate for intense use ("receiving area"). LCPs can establish policies to implement a TDR program to restrict development in areas vulnerable to sea level rise and allow for transfer of development rights to parcels with less vulnerability to hazards. A TDR program can encourage the relocation of development away from at-risk locations, and may be used in combination with a buy-out program.

A.6 Develop adequate setbacks for new development: Ensure structures are set back far enough inland from the beach or bluff edge such that they will not be endangered by erosion (including sea level rise induced erosion) over the life of the structure, *without the use of a shoreline protective device*. When used to address future risk, setbacks are normally defined by a measurable distance from an identifiable location such as a bluff edge, line of vegetation, dune crest, or roadway. Establish general guidance and criteria for setbacks in LCPs that consider changes in retreat due to sea level rise. Require detailed, site-specific analyses through LCPs and CDPs to determine the size of the setback, taking into consideration sea level rise and establish the expected life of the

structure (for example, the time period over which the setback should be effective).

Figure 18. Photo depicting a development setback in Pismo Beach. (*Source:* California Coastal Records Project)

A.7 **Limit subdivisions in areas vulnerable to sea level rise**: Prohibit any new land divisions, including subdivisions, lot splits, lot line adjustments, and/or certificates of compliance that create new beachfront or blufftop lots unless the lots can meet specific criteria that ensure that when the lots are developed, the development will not be exposed to hazards or pose any risks to protection of coastal resources.

A.8 **Update development siting, code, and design standards to avoid, minimize, or reduce risks from coastal hazards and extreme events**: Establish and implement building codes and standards for building siting and construction that avoid or minimize risks from flooding and erosion and increase resilience to extreme events within sea level rise hazard zones. Such standards and applicable building code provisions should be included in LCPs as additional development controls in areas that are identified in the LCP as hazard areas, and applied in specific projects through a CDP.

A.8a **Update flood protection measures to incorporate both FEMA and Coastal Act requirements:** Require new development located in areas subject to current or future flood/wave action to be sited and designed to be capable of withstanding such impacts in compliance with both FEMA and Coastal Act requirements. For example, ensure that implementation of adaptation measures such as elevation of habitable areas, break-away walls, *etc*. will be consistent with both LCP and FEMA provisions.

A.8b **Limit basements and first floor habitable space**: Where applicable, in areas likely to be subject to current or future flood/wave action, revise residential building standards to prohibit habitable space at elevations subject to wave/flood risk. Specifically address potential impacts of basements on long-range adaptation options such as landward relocation or removal.

A.8c **Evaluate impacts from flood protection measures:** Require new development that must be located in areas likely subject to current or future flood/wave action or elevated groundwater to evaluate potential impacts to adjacent or nearby properties from all proposed structural flood protection measures to ensure that these measures will not create adverse direct and/or cumulative impacts either on-site or off-site.

A.9 Analyze options for removal when planning and designing new development: Design options should not place an undue burden on future property owners or coastal resources. For new development in high hazard areas or resource-constrained areas where managed retreat might be an appropriate option at some time in the future, ensure that foundation designs or other aspects of the development will not preclude future incremental relocation or managed retreat. Foundation and building elements, such as deepened perimeter foundations, caissons or basements, may be difficult to remove in the future, or their removal may put adjacent properties at risk. Alternative design options should be considered, and employed if site conditions allow.

A.9a **Develop a plan to remove or relocate structures that become threatened:** Require new development authorized through a CDP that is subject to wave action, erosion, or other hazards to be removed or relocated if it becomes threatened in the future.

A.9b **Identify triggers for incremental removal of structures on constrained lots**: When a lot is not large enough to accommodate development that avoids coastal hazards for the expected life of the development, develop a project option that minimizes hazards from the identified sea level rise scenarios for as long as possible, and then requires incremental retreat once certain triggers are met.

Triggers for relocation or removal of the structure would be determined by changing site conditions such as when erosion is within a certain distance of the foundation; when monthly high tides are within a certain distance of the finished floor elevation; when building officials prohibit occupancy; or when the wetland buffer area decreases to a certain width.

A.9c **Avoid shoreline protection for new development:** Require CDPs for new development in hazardous locations to include as a condition of approval a waiver of rights to future shoreline protection that would substantially alter natural landforms or cause other adverse coastal resource impacts.

A.9d **Limit the use of foundations or basements that can interfere with coastal processes:** In locations where foundation or building elements, such as deepened perimeter foundations, caissons or basements may be exposed to wave action through rising sea level or erosion, require analysis of less extensive foundation or building options.

A.9e **Develop triggers for foundation and structure removal:** If no less damaging foundation alternatives are possible, ensure that the foundation design allows for incremental removal as the foundation elements become exposed, and develop pre-established triggers, for example when the bluff edge or shoreline comes within a certain distance of the foundation, for incremental or complete removal that will avoid future resource impacts.

Figure 19. Photo depicting eroding bluff and exposed caissons in Encinitas, CA. (*Photograph by Lesley Ewing*)

A.10 Ensure that current and future risks are assumed by the property owner: New development should be undertaken in such a way that the consequences from development in high hazard areas will not be passed on to public or coastal resources. Recognize that over time, sea level rise will cause the public trust boundary to move inland. Establish standards, permit conditions, and deed restrictions that ensure that current and future risks are assumed by the property owner. Consider policies that would encourage or require property owners to set aside money, such as in the form of a bond, as a contingency if it becomes necessary to modify, relocate, or remove development that becomes threatened in the future.

A.11 Real estate disclosure: Require sellers of real estate to disclose permit conditions related to coastal hazards, or property defects or vulnerabilities, including information about known current and potential future vulnerabilities to sea level rise, to prospective buyers prior to closing escrow.

Goal: Incorporate sea level rise adaptation into redevelopment policies

A.12 Avoid the expansion or perpetuation of existing structures in at-risk locations: On an eroding shoreline, the seaward portions of an existing structure may become threatened as the setback or buffer zone between the structure and the mean high tide line or bluff edge is reduced due to erosion of the beach or bluff. When the seaward portion of the structure no longer meets the standards or setback that would be required for new development, it becomes a "non-conforming" structure for purposes of redevelopment policies and regulations. The following should be considered, as consistent with the Coastal Act, FEMA policies, and other relevant standards, to address existing non-conforming development to avoid the need for shoreline or bluff protective devices and associated impacts to coastal resources.

A.12a **Update non-conforming structure policies and definitions**: Develop policies and regulations to define non-conforming development in the area between the sea and the first coastal roadway or other known hazard zones to avoid perpetuating development that may become at risk and require a new protective device or extend the need for an existing protective device.

A.12b **Limit redevelopment or upgrades to existing structures in at risk locations**: Use redevelopment policies or regulations to limit expansions, additions, or substantial renovations of existing structures in danger from erosion. Require removal of non-conforming portions of the existing structure, when possible, when a remodel or renovation is proposed.

A.12c **Limit foundation work within the geologic setback area:** To facilitate removal of non-conforming portions of an existing structure, use LCP regulations and CDPs to limit new or replacement foundations or substantial improvements, other than repair and maintenance, to the existing foundation when located seaward of the Geologic Setback line. Approve significant new foundation work only when it is located inland of the setback line for new development and when it will not interfere with coastal processes in the future.

A.12d **Limit increases to existing non-conformities:** Use LCP regulations and CDPs to allow non-exempt repair and maintenance and modifications only if they do not increase the size or degree of non-conformity of the existing structure. For shoreline or blufftop development, any decrease in the existing non-conforming setback would increase the degree of non-conformity.

A.12e **Limit additions to non-conforming structures:** Use LCP regulations and CDPs to acknowledge that additions to existing structures should be considered new development that must conform to the standards for new development including but not limited to avoiding future protective devices. Consider limitations on the size of additions unless non-conforming portions of the structure are removed.

A.12f **Address existing protection of non-conforming structures:** Use LCP regulations and CDP conditions to put current and future property owners on notice that if there is currently shoreline or bluff protection for an existing structure, the structure is likely at-risk and improvements to that structure in its current location may be limited. Also, consider acknowledging that any rights to

retain the existing protective device(s) apply only to the structure that existed at the time the protective device was constructed or permitted.

A.13 Redevelopment of existing structures: Define "redevelopment" as, at a minimum, replacement of 50% or more of an existing structure. Other options that may be used to define what constitutes redevelopment or a replacement structure could include 1) limits on the extent of replacement of major structural components such as the foundation or exterior walls, or 2) improvements costing more than 50% of the assessed or appraised value of the existing structure. The redevelopment definition should take into consideration existing conditions and pattern of development, potential impacts to coastal resources, and the need for bluff or shoreline protective devices if the structure remains in its current, non-conforming location.

A.13a **Require redevelopment to meet the standards for new development:** Use LCPs and CDPs to require that renovations meeting the threshold for redevelopment should not be approved unless the entire structure meets the standards for new development, including but not limited to a waiver of right to protection. Specify that if any existing non-conforming elements are permitted to remain, those non-conforming elements are not subject to rights to protection pursuant to Coastal Act Section 30235.

A.13b **Include cumulative improvement or additions to existing structures in the definition of redevelopment:** Use LCP regulations to acknowledge that demolition, renovation, or replacement of less than 50% (or less) of an existing structure constitutes redevelopment when the proposed improvements would result cumulatively in replacement of more than 50% of the existing structure from an established date, such as certification of the LUP.

A.14 Remove existing shoreline protective devices: On properties with existing shoreline protective devices, use regulations to require removal of the protective device when the structure requiring protection is redeveloped or removed. If removal is not possible, require a waiver of any rights to retain the protective device to protect any structure other than the one that existed at the time the protective device was constructed or permitted.

Goal: Encourage the removal of development that is threatened by sea level rise

A.15 Use Rolling Easements: The term "rolling easement" refers to the policy or policies intended to allow coastal lands and habitats including beaches and wetlands to migrate landward over time as the mean high tide line and public trust boundary moves inland with sea level rise. Such policies often restrict the use of shoreline protective structures (such as the "no future seawall" limitation sometimes used by the Commission), limit new development, and encourage the removal of structures that are seaward (or become seaward over time) of a designated boundary. This boundary may be designated based on such variables as the mean high tide line, dune vegetation line, or other dynamic line or legal requirement. Despite the term "rolling easements," not all of the strategies related to rolling easements actually involve the use of recorded easements.

A.16 Develop an incentive program to relocate existing development at risk: Provide incentives to relocate development out of hazardous areas and to acquire oceanfront properties damaged by storms, where relocation is not feasible. Consider creating a relocation fund through increased development fees, *in lieu* fees, or other funding mechanisms.

A.17 Transfer of Development Rights programs (TDR): See Strategy A.5b above.

A.18 Acquisition and buyout programs: Acquisition includes the acquiring of land from the individual landowner(s). Structures are typically demolished or relocated, the property is restored, and future development on the land is restricted. Such a program is often used in combination with a TDR program that can provide incentives for relocation. Undeveloped lands are conserved as open space or public parks. LCPs can include policies to encourage the local government to establish an acquisition plan or buyout program to acquire property at risk from flooding or other hazards.

Goal: Use "soft" or "natural" solutions as a preferred alternative for protection of existing endangered structures

A.19 Require the use of green infrastructure as a preferred alternative: Under appropriate shoreline conditions, require or encourage development to use "soft" or "natural" solutions or "living shorelines" as an alternative to the placement of hard shoreline protection in order to protect development or other resources and to enhance natural resource areas. Examples of soft solutions include vegetative planting, dune restoration, and sand nourishment.

A.19a **Establish a beach nourishment program and protocols**: New policies may be needed to address increased demand or need for beach nourishment with sea level rise. Policies within an LCP may identify locations where nourishment may be appropriate; establish a beach nourishment program and protocols for conducting beach nourishment; establish criteria for the design, construction, and management of the nourishment area; and/or establish measures to minimize adverse biological resource impacts from deposition of material, such as sand compatibility specifications, timing or seasonal restrictions, and identification of environmentally preferred locations for deposits. Beach nourishment programs should also consider how nourishment options may need to change over time as sea level rises.

A.19b **Dune management**: Establish management actions to maintain and restore dunes and natural dune processes. Dunes provide buffers against erosion and flooding by trapping windblown sand, storing excess beach sand, and protecting inland areas, and they also provide habitat. This is likely most effective for areas with some existing dune habitat and where there is sufficient space to expand a foredune beach for sand exchange between the more active (beach) and stable (dune) parts of the ecosystem. LCPs can identify existing dune systems and develop or encourage management plans to enhance and restore these areas,

including consideration of ways that the system will change with rising sea level. CDPs for dune management plans may need to include periodic reviews so the permitted plans can be updated to address increased erosion from sea level rise, and the need for increased sand retention and replenishment.

Figure 20. Photo depicting dune restoration at Surfer's Point, Ventura. (*Photograph courtesy of Surfrider Foundation*)

A.19c **Regional Sediment Management (RSM) programs**: Develop a Regional Sediment Management (RSM) program including strategies designed to allow the use of natural processes to solve engineering problems. To be most effective, RSM programs include the entire watershed, account for effects of human activities on sediment, protect and enhance coastal ecosystems, and maintain safe access to beaches for recreational purposes. LCPs can support development of an RSM program and its implementation, and the program should be periodically updated to address on-going changes from sea level rise. Natural boundaries for RSM may overlap within several LCPs, so regional cooperation may be needed for best implementation. Individual actions such as a beach nourishment project would be accomplished through a CDP. Many coastal RSM programs have already been developed and can be used as a resource. See the *Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup* website (and Appendix C) for more information.

A.19d **Maintenance or restoration of natural sand supply**: Adjustment of the sediment supply has been one of the ways natural systems have accommodated

changes from sea level. Maintenance or restoration of sediment involves identifying natural sediment supplies and removing and/or modifying existing structures or actions that impair natural sand supply, such as dams or sand mining. LCPs could include policies and implementing standards that support nature-based responses to sea level rise by maintaining and restoring natural sand supply. Where applicable, develop policies and standards to prohibit sand mining, regulate sand replenishment, and promote removal of dams or the by-passing of sand around dams. Plans should take into consideration changes in sand supply due to sea level rise and may identify and designate high priority areas for restoring natural processes. These actions and policies can also be implemented through a Regional Sediment Management (RSM) program.

A.19e **Beneficial reuse of sediment through dredging management**: Dredging involves the removal of sediment from harbor areas to facilitate boat and ship traffic or from wetland areas for restoration. Dredging management actions and plans may need to be updated to account for elevated water levels. Policies can be developed with an LCP and/or carried out through a CDP to facilitate delivery of clean sediment extracted from dredging to nearby beaches or wetland areas where needed. Beneficial reuse of sediment in this way can be coordinated through a Regional Sediment Management (RSM) program and/or through coordination with other jurisdictions.

Goal: Allow bluff and shoreline protective devices only to protect existing endangered structures

A.20 Use hard protection only if allowable and if no feasible less damaging alternative exists: "Hard" coastal protection is a broad term for most engineered features such as seawalls, revetments, cave fills, and bulkheads that block the landward retreat of the shoreline. In some cases, caissons and pilings may also be considered hard shoreline protective devices. Due to adverse effects on shoreline sand supply and beach area available for public use, such protective devices should be avoided when feasible. Under current law, shoreline protection for existing structures in danger from erosion may be allowed if coastal resource impacts are avoided or minimized and fully mitigated where unavoidable.

A.20a **Retention of existing shoreline protection**: On intensely developed, urbanized shorelines, if the removal of armoring would put existing development at risk and not otherwise result in significant protection or enhancement of coastal resources, it may be appropriate to allow properly designed shoreline armoring to remain for the foreseeable future, subject to conditions that provide for potential future removal in coordination with surrounding development. However, the proper short term responses, longer term adaptation measures, and mitigation of on-going resource impacts should be determined through updated context-specific LCP planning and consideration of the existing rights and responsibilities of development in the area (see strategies A.21 – A.25).

A.21 Require monitoring of the structure: Require periodic monitoring of the shoreline protective device to examine for structural damage, excessive scour, or other impacts from coastal hazards and sea level rise. Ensure that the structures remain within the initial footprint and that they retain functional stability.

A.22 Conditional approval of shoreline protective device: Use LCP regulations and permit conditions to require monitoring of impacts to shoreline processes and beach width both at the project site and the broader area and/or littoral cell as feasible, and provide for such actions as removal or modification of armoring in the future if it is no longer needed for protection or if site conditions change.

A.22a **Limit the authorization of shoreline protective devices to the development being protected:** Use LCP regulations and CDP conditions to require permits for bluff and shoreline protective devices to expire when the currently existing structure requiring protection is redeveloped, is no longer present, or no longer requires a protective device, whichever occurs first. Prior to expiration of the permit, the property owner should apply for a Coastal Development Permit to remove the protective device, or to modify or retain it if removal is not feasible at that time.

A.22b **Require assessment of impacts from existing pre-Coastal Act or permitted shoreline armoring:** Use LCP regulations and permit conditions to specify that expansion and/or alteration of a pre-Coastal Act or legally permitted bluff or shoreline protective device requires a new CDP and the review should include an assessment of changes to geologic site and beach conditions including but not limited to, changes in beach width relative to sea level rise, implementation of any long-term, large scale sand replenishment or shoreline restoration programs, and any ongoing impacts to public access and recreation from the existing device.

A.22c **Reassess impacts and need for existing armoring over time:** Use LCP regulations and CDPs to provide for reassessment of the impacts from protective devices at specific trigger points, including when substantial improvement or redevelopment of the structure requiring protection is proposed, or when existing armoring is being modified or expanded. Reassessment should consider the effect any significant improvement to a structure requiring protection will have on the length of time the protective device will remain, and if the existing armoring is still required, acknowledge that it is authorized to protect the existing structure only. The CDP review should assess existing site conditions and evaluate options to modify, replace, or remove the existing device in a manner that would eliminate or mitigate any identified impacts that may be occurring on public access and recreation, scenic views, sand supply, and other coastal resources, if feasible.

A.23 Require mitigation for impacts of shoreline protective devices: For unavoidable public resource impacts from shoreline structures permitted under the Coastal Act, require mitigation of resource impacts over the life of the structure as a condition of approval for the development permit. For example, require landowners to pay mitigation fees and/or complete other mitigation actions for the loss of sandy beach and other

adverse impacts on public access and recreation due to shoreline protection devices. Importantly, mitigation measures should be planned in such a way that sea level rise will not impair their efficacy over time. Other mitigation measures could include acquisition of other shoreline property for public recreational purposes, construction of public access and recreational improvements along the shoreline, and/or easements to protect lateral access along the shoreline in areas where seawalls eliminate sandy beach.

A.23a **Reassess mitigation over time as necessary:** Impacts of shoreline structures, including to shoreline and sand supply, public access and recreation, ecosystem values, and other relevant coastal resources, should be fully mitigated. Where reassessment of an approved structure is authorized, phasing of necessary mitigation may be appropriate.

A.24 Limit retention of existing shore protection: On lots with existing pre-Coastal Act or permitted armoring, consider requiring a waiver of rights to retain such protection for any structures other than the structure that existed at the time the armoring was constructed or permitted.

A.25 Removal of shoreline protection structures: The removal of shoreline protection structures can open beach or wetland areas to natural processes and provide for natural responses to sea level rise. LCPs can specify priority areas where shoreline protection structures should be removed if they are no longer needed or in a state of great disrepair, including areas where structures threaten the survival of wetlands and other habitats, beaches, trails, and other recreational areas. Once these priority areas have been identified, assessment of potential re-siting of structures and removal of armoring could be required by a CDP as redevelopment occurs.

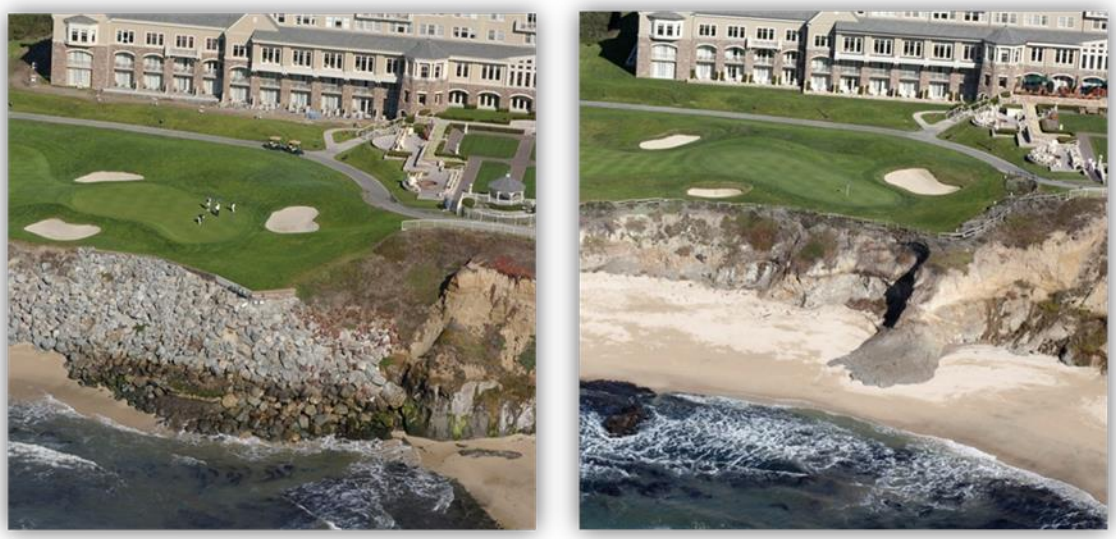

Figure 21. Photo depicting removal of shoreline protective structure. Removal of rock revetment restores access and allows natural bluff erosion at the Ritz Carlton in Half Moon Bay. (*Source:* California Coastal Records Project)

A.25a **Remove shoreline protective structures located on public lands:** Over time, sea level rise will cause the public trust boundary to move inland. If the structures

as originally approved were located on uplands but that land becomes subject to the public trust in the future, the State Lands Commission or any local government or other entity acting as trustee for public trust lands could require the structures to be removed. The Commission or local governments could approve permit conditions to ensure permittees obtain authorization to retain or remove structures if they ever become located on public trust lands. Removal might also be accomplished through non-regulatory means such as offering incentives for removal to property owners or by incorporating removal of public structures into Capital Improvement Plans.

Goal: Require special considerations for critical infrastructure and facilities

A.26 Plan ahead to preserve function of critical facilities: Addressing sea level rise impacts to critical facilities and infrastructure will likely be more complex than for other resources and may require greater amounts of planning time, impacts analyses, public input, and funding. To address these complexities, establish measures that ensure continued function of critical infrastructure, or the basic facilities, service, networks, and systems needed for the functioning of a community. Programs and measures within an LCP could include identification of critical infrastructure that is vulnerable to SLR hazards, establishment of a plan for managed relocation of at-risk facilities, and/or other measures to ensure functional continuity of the critical services provided by infrastructure at risk from sea level rise and extreme storms. Repair and maintenance, elevation or spot-repair of key components, or fortification of structures where consistent with the Coastal Act may be implemented through CDPs.

A.26a **Develop or update a long-term public works plan for critical facilities to address sea level rise**: Develop a long-term management plan to address the complexities of planning for sea level rise that incorporates any potential maintenance, relocation, or retrofits and structural changes to critical facilities to accommodate changes in sea level, and obtain Coastal Commission certification.

A.27 Apply high sea level rise projections for siting and design of critical facilities: Given the planning complexities, high costs, and potential impacts resulting from damage, there is reason to be particularly cautious when planning and designing new critical facilities and/or retrofitting existing facilities. Ensure that critical facilities are designed to function even if the highest projected amounts of sea level rise occur and that sites with hazardous materials are protected from worst-case scenario sea level rise impacts.

A.27a **Design coastal-dependent infrastructure to accommodate worst case scenario sea level rise**: Include policies that would require proposals and/or expansion plans to address sea level rise for coastal dependent infrastructure that must necessarily be sited in potentially hazardous areas, such as industrial, energy, and port facilities. Such facilities should be designed to withstand worst case future impacts while minimizing risks to other coastal resources through initial siting, design, and/or inclusion of features that will allow for future adaptation.

A.28 Site and design wastewater disposal systems to avoid risks from sea level rise: Wastewater treatment and disposal systems are particularly challenging in that they are often located in areas that will be impacted by sea level rise. Ensure that these systems are not adversely affected by the impacts of sea level rise over the full life of the structure and ensure that damage to these facilities would not result in impacts to water quality or other coastal resources. Avoid locating new facilities in hazardous areas if possible. If complete avoidance is not possible, minimize elements of the system that are in hazardous areas (for example, locate the main facility on higher ground and only place pump stations in potentially hazardous areas), and design any facilities in hazardous areas to withstand worst-case scenario sea level rise impacts.

Goal: Protect transportation infrastructure

A.29 Identify priorities for adaptation planning and response: Carry out vulnerability analyses to identify chronic problem areas that are highly subject to erosion, wave impacts, flooding, or other coastal hazards or that maybe become so in the near future. Coordinate with Caltrans and local public works/transportation agencies to address high priority areas and increase monitoring efforts of chronic problem areas.

A.30 Add policies to address impacts to transportation routes: If transportation facilities are at risk from sea level rise, coordinate with Caltrans and local public works/transportation agencies to establish new alternative transportation routes or a plan to ensure continued alternative transportation and parking is available that allows for continued access to beaches and other recreation areas.

A.30a **Integrate LCP/land use planning processes with transportation planning processes:** Updates and changes to LCPs and other land use planning efforts should be jointly planned, evaluated, and implemented with Coordinated System Management Plans, Regional Transportation Plans, and other transportation planning efforts to ensure that long-term land use and access goals and needs are aligned.

A.31 Allow for phased implementation of realignment and relocation projects: In some cases it may be necessary to make incremental changes in transportation networks so that access to and along the coast can be maintained while also addressing coastal hazards over the long-term. For example, a phased approach may allow for interim shoreline protection to maintain an existing road alignment while future realignment plans are evaluated and pursued. Such phased approaches should be coordinated with Caltrans and local public works/transportation agencies and aligned with long-term LCP planning and adaptation goals. Individual projects will be implemented through CDPs.

Figure 22. Photo depicting planned retreat for major public infrastructure. The Piedras Blancas Highway 1 Realignment will move nearly 3 miles (5km) of Highway 1 500 ft (152 m) inland. (*Source:* California Coastal Records Project)

A.32 Plan and design transportation systems to accommodate anticipated sea level rise impacts: Ensure that transportation networks are designed to function even if the highest projected sea level rise amounts occur. Efforts to realign, retrofit, and/or protect infrastructure should be coordinated with Caltrans, local public works/transportation agencies, and LCP planning efforts, and individual projects will be implemented through CDPs.

A.32a **Retrofit existing transportation infrastructure as necessary:** In instances where relocation is not an option, repair damage and/or retrofit existing structures to better withstand sea level rise impacts. For example, use stronger materials, elevate bridges or sections of roadways, and build larger or additional drainage systems to address flooding concerns.

A.32b **Build redundancy into the system:** Provide alternate routes, as possible, to allow for access to and along the coast in instances in which sections of roadways may become temporarily impassible as a result of coastal hazards. Ensure that alternate route information is provided to residents and visitors to coastal areas.

A.33 Incorporate sea level rise considerations into Port Master Plans and other port activities: Ensure that ports and related infrastructure are designed to function given anticipated sea level rise. In some cases, this may mean initially designing structures to accommodate projected sea level rise impacts. Other options may include planning for and ensuring capacity for future adaptive actions.

A.33a **Retrofit existing port infrastructure as necessary**: Given the coastal-dependent nature of many port structures, it may not be feasible to site or relocate development to avoid hazards. In these instances it may be more appropriate to include efforts to accommodate and withstand sea level rise during actions to

repair or retrofit existing structures. Options may include using more robust designs or materials or elevating structures.

A.33b **Minimize resource impacts that may result from future use of shoreline protective structures**: If existing, coastal-dependent port structures require shoreline protective structures, minimize resource impacts as feasible and consistent with Chapter 3 and/or Chapter 8 of the Coastal Act, as applicable, by encouraging inland expansion of protective devices rather than further fill of coastal waters.

A.33c **Ensure that linkages to overland transportation networks are able to adapt to sea level rise impacts**: Coordinate with relevant stakeholders to ensure that linkages between port infrastructure and overland transportation networks will be resilient to future sea level rise impacts.

A.33d **Ensure that lessees and other parties understand sea level rise risks and vulnerabilities**: Coordinate with lessees and other stakeholders to ensure that they understand the risks associated with development in hazard areas as well as the responsibilities that come with such development.

B. Public Access and Recreation

One of the highest priorities in the Coastal Act is the mandate to maximize public access and recreational opportunities to and along the coast. The main goals and Coastal Act policies (Sections 30210, 30220, 30221, 30213) that relate to public access and recreation are to:

- Maximize public access and recreational use by protecting beaches and other coastal areas suitable for such use
- Protect lower cost visitor and recreational facilities and accessways

Chapter 3 of the Guidance covers the impacts to public access and recreation that might result from sea level rise or the interaction of sea level rise with development patterns. Certified LCPs should already have policies and standards to assure that existing public access and visitor serving amenities are protected and that maximum public access is both planned for and provided with new development when warranted. However, LCP policies and standards may need to be updated to consider sea level rise hazards. Adaptation options have been developed to support the access goals of the Coastal Act through both LCP policies and CDP conditions, and the following strategies cover a range of options for addressing the identified goals of the Coastal Act.

Goal: Maximize public access and recreational use by protecting beaches and other coastal areas

B.1 Incorporate sea level rise into a comprehensive beach management strategy: Update or develop a new comprehensive beach management strategy to address loss of beach areas, including loss of lateral access, or changes in beach management due to sea level rise. Establish a program to minimize loss of beach area through, as may be appropriate, a beach nourishment program; restoring sand and sediment supply to the littoral cell; removal, adjustments, or maintenance to shoreline protection structures; use of man-made structures such as terminal groins or artificial reefs to retain sediment; or other actions.

B.1a **Develop a sediment management and sand replenishment strategy**: Identify natural sediment supplies and remove and/or modify existing structures or actions that impair natural sand supply, such as dams or sand mining. LCPs could include policies and implementing standards that support nature-based responses to sea level rise by maintaining and restoring natural sand supply. Where applicable, develop policies and standards to prohibit sand mining, regulate sand replenishment, and promote removal of dams or the by-passing of sand around dams. Plans should take into consideration changes in sand supply due to sea level rise. These actions and policies can also be implemented through a Regional Sediment Management (RSM) program.

B.2 **Plan ahead to replace loss of access and recreation areas:** Identify replacement opportunities or otherwise plan ahead for how to replace recreation areas and accessways that will be lost due to inundation or damage associated with sea level rise. An LCP could designate and zone lands for this through, for example, a phased overlay or other regulatory measures that ensure that access and recreational areas are available in the future. Local governments may choose to provide additional incentives to encourage creation of new recreation areas or opportunities. Such incentives could include grant for protection new recreation areas or tax breaks for recreation related businesses.

B.2a **Protect existing open space adjacent to the coast**: Plan for future coastal recreational space and parkland by protecting open space adjacent to coastal habitats so that beaches and other habitats can migrate or so that there is open space available as parkland or other areas are lost.

B.2b **Plan for removal of structures that limit inland migration of beaches**: Seawalls and other development adjacent to beaches and other coastal habitats will impede the ability of these habitats to migrate inland and will therefore result in the inundation and eventual loss of these areas. Consideration should be given to removing and relocating these structures to ensure that beaches and other habitats are able to persist over time. Additional detail on removal of structures can be found above in the "Coastal Development and Hazards" section of this chapter.

Goal: Protect lower cost visitor and recreational facilities and accessways

B.3 **Site and design access sites and facilities to minimize impacts**: Add policies that require public access sites, segments of the CCT, and recreation and visitor-serving facilities to be sited and designed to avoid impacts from sea level rise, while maximizing public access and recreation opportunities. Examples of siting and design standards for development can be found in section A. Where facilities can be safely sited for the near term but future impacts are likely, require an adaptive management plan detailing steps for maintenance, retrofitting, and/or relocation.

B.3a **Require mitigation of any unavoidable impacts**: For unavoidable impacts to public access or recreation from shoreline armoring or other development, require mitigation of impacts through the addition of new public access, recreation opportunities, visitor-serving accommodations, or Coastal Trail segments, or payment of fees to fund such improvements. Importantly, mitigation measures should be planned in such a way that, if possible, sea level rise will not impair their efficacy over time.

B.4 **Plan ahead to replace loss of visitor-serving and recreational facilities**: Develop a plan to replace any visitor-serving facilities that are lost due to impacts from sea level rise, maximizing continued provision of affordable options and an appropriate mix of accommodations over time. For example, an LCP could include standards to re-site existing visitor-serving and recreational facilities when they become impacted by sea

level rise and/or could identify and zone for future areas to be reserved for these functions.

B.5 **Add requirements for retrofit/relocation of public access and recreation sites at risk**: The LCP can add policies that require all new public access and recreation areas, sections of the CCT, visitor- serving accommodations, or related recreation facilities to be retrofitted or relocated if they become threatened from erosion, flooding, or inundation. For new facilities and public access sites, the CDP conditions of approval can specify how maintenance, retrofit, or relocation will take place. Policies and plans should be designed to be adaptive so that retrofits and or/relocations are implemented as sea level rise impacts occur.

B.5a **Retrofit or relocate recreation and visitor-serving facilities**: Consider options to retrofit existing recreation and visitor-serving facilities to better accommodate sea level rise impacts. Such retrofits could include use of different building materials and/or relocating facilities.

B.5b **Retrofit or relocate vertical accessways**: Consider options to retrofit existing accessways to reduce impacts from sea level rise. Such retrofits could include using different materials that can better withstand impacts, or re-orienting the layout or other features of accessways to lessen damage and other impacts. Also begin to plan for and identify triggers and options for relocating accessways over time as conditions change.

B.5c **Retrofit or relocate sections of the Coastal Trail**: Use boardwalks, bridges, and/or other design features to ensure continuity of the CCT in sections that are vulnerable to SLR hazards. Some sections may need to be relocated over time. An LCP could identify vulnerable sections of the CCT and establish a phased approach to relocate sections of the trail in such a way that is consistent with provisions of the Coastal Act and ensures that the CCT remains within sight, sound, or smell of the sea.

Goal: Foster efforts to better understand impacts of sea level rise

B.6 **Support research on impacts to recreation and public access**: Changes in sea level will affect wave conditions and sediment transport, but additional research is needed to understand how these changes will affect specific conditions for surfing and other recreation activities. While such research programs may be outside the scope of individual local jurisdictions, statements of support for the local issues that need to be addressed can help guide research agendas at the regional state or federal level. Or, such needs can serve to guide grant applications to undertake the needed projects within a jurisdiction. To the extent possible, add policies to promote research on sea level rise impacts to recreational activities like surfing or other coastal recreational uses in the LCP jurisdiction.

C. Coastal Habitats, ESHA, and Wetlands

The Coastal Act provides for the protection of both land and marine habitats. It mandates that ESHA and marine resources shall be protected against significant disruption of habitat value and shall be maintained, enhanced, and restored as feasible (Sections 30230, 30233, 30240, 30240(a), 30240(b)). The main goals and Coastal Act policies that relate to coastal habitats are to:

- Protect, enhance, and restore sensitive habitats
- Avoid significant disruption to sensitive habitats
- Avoid significant impacts to habitats from adjacent development
- Manage sediment in ways that benefit habitats

Chapter 3 of the Guidance covers the impacts to coastal habitats and resources that might result from sea level rise or the interaction of sea level rise with development patterns. Certified LCPs should already have policies and standards to ensure that ESHA, wetlands, and other coastal habitats and resources are protected to the maximum extent feasible. However, LCP policies and standards may need to be updated to consider sea level rise hazards. Adaptation options have been developed to support the habitat protection goals of the Coastal Act through both LCP policies and CDP conditions, and the following strategies cover a range of options for addressing the identified goals of the Coastal Act.

Goal: Protect, enhance, and restore sensitive habitats

C.1 **Open space preservation and conservation**: Preserve land for its ecological or recreational value. This may involve limiting or prohibiting development and any uses that conflict with ecological preservation goals. LCPs can establish transfer of development rights programs to offset reduced development potential and can develop open space management plans that evaluate and consider the impacts of sea level rise, extreme events, and other climate change impacts. LCPs can establish open space and conservation areas through land use designations and zoning, redevelopment restrictions, acquisition and easement programs, and setback and buffer requirements.

C.1a **Update policies to provide for new or restored coastal habitat**: Update policies to require new coastal habitat to be provided or for degraded areas to be restored to account for the expected loss of existing habitat that will occur when development blocks the necessary upland migration due to sea level rise. Use an adaptive management approach where applicable. Encourage policies that provide for conservation or restoration of multiple habitat types.

C.1b **Identify areas for public acquisition**: New or updated LCPs can establish a program to partner with state, federal, and non-profit organizations to acquire and protect natural resource areas for public use, including areas that could serve as

refugia for species impacted by sea level rise, or areas that could be appropriate sites for coastal habitat creation or restoration.

C.1c **Establish conservation easements or other development restrictions to protect habitat**: Establish a formalized program to identify, acquire, and manage areas appropriate for some form of conservation protection. Easements or other strategies may be used to limit or restrict development on portions of a lot parcel that are most vulnerable to SLR impacts. The program might develop standard agreements to be used for easements and identify the entities that could hold the easements. A conservation easement program could be established on a community wide basis through an LCP and implemented on a parcel by parcel basis through individual CDPs.

C.1d **Require open space protection as a component of new development located adjacent to coastal habitats**: The LCP can require permit conditions for new development in certain areas that buffers around natural resource areas be protected through a conservation easement, deed restrictions, or other comparable mechanism.

C.1e **Use Rolling Easements**: See Strategy A.15 above.

C.1f **Transfer of Development Rights programs (TDR)**: See Strategy A.5b above.

Goal: Avoid significant disruption to habitats

C.2 **Use ecological buffer zones and/or increase the size of buffers**: Buffer zones are intended to protect sensitive habitats from the adverse impacts of development and human disturbance. An important aspect of buffers is that they are distinct ecologically from the habitat they are designed to protect. LCPs can establish requirements for ecological buffers and provide guidance on how to establish or adjust these buffers to accommodate sea level rise. CDPs should require buffers to be designed, where applicable, to provide "habitat migration corridors" that allow sensitive habitats and species to migrate inland or upland as sea level rises.

C.2a **Consider sea level rise buffer zones**: Update buffer zone policies to allow room for coastal habitats to migrate with changes in sea level. The size of the buffer needed to allow for migration will vary depending on the individual wetland or habitat type, as well as site-specific features such as natural or artificial topography and existing development. For instance, in flat areas, a larger buffer may be needed, but in steep areas, a smaller buffer may be acceptable.

C.3 **Avoid impacts to Marine Protected Areas**: Recognize the importance of the State's network of marine protected areas (MPAs) in protecting the diversity and abundance of marine life. Understand that planning and permitting decisions made on land could have impacts on these areas, particularly as conditions change with sea level rise, and avoid disruptions to these habitats as feasible and applicable.

C.4 **Protect specific ESHA functions:** Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) are areas that are critically important for the survival of species or valuable for maintaining

biodiversity. These areas can include nursery grounds, spawning areas, or highly diverse areas. Where at risk from sea level rise, the LCP should establish measures to ensure the continued viability of the habitat areas, such as protection of migration zones, habitat corridors, and other applicable adaptation strategies, as listed below. ESHA that is not at risk from sea level rise should also be afforded special protection in the LCP to serve as refugia.

C.4a **Protect wildlife corridors, habitat linkages, and land upland of wetlands to allow habitat migration**: Preserve open areas that are adjacent to wetlands to allow for migration of these habitats as sea levels rise.

C.4b **Protect refugia areas**: Protect refugia, or areas that may be relatively unaltered by global climate change and thus can serve as a refuge for coastal species displaced from their native habitat due to sea level rise or other climate change impacts.

C.4c **Promote increased habitat connectivity to allow species movement**: Connectivity refers to the degree to which the landscape facilitates animal movement and other ecological flows. Roads, highways, median barriers, fences, walls, culverts, and other structures can inhibit movement of animals. Develop LCP policies that will enable identification of important animal movement corridors. Develop regulations to protect these corridors for present and future conditions, taking into account habitat shifts from climate change. In LCPs and through CDPs, require that new structures such as highways, medians, bridges, culverts, and other development are designed to facilitate movement of animals.

C.4d **Facilitate wetland and other habitat migration**: Reserve space for a "habitat migration corridor" or areas into which wetlands and other habitats could migrate as sea level rise induced inundation of existing wetland areas occurs. In the LCP, identify potential habitat migration corridors. These areas could be reserved for this purpose in an LCP through land acquisition, use designations, zoning buffers, setbacks, conservation easement requirements, and clustering development. LCPs should also consider developing a plan for acquisition of important habitat migration corridors.

Goal: Avoid significant impacts to habitats from adjacent development

C.5 Limit new development in areas adjacent to wetlands, ESHA, and other coastal habitats: Restrict the construction of new development in areas that are adjacent to wetlands, ESHA, and other coastal habitats in order to preserve buffers and open areas to allow for habitat migration.

C.5a **Cluster development away from coastal habitats**: Existing LCPs will likely have policies that already require clustering of development. To address sea level rise, these policies might need to be updated to include clustering development away from land where wetlands and other coastal habitats could migrate with sea level rise.

C.5b **Limit subdivisions**: Update subdivision requirements to require provision for inland migration of natural resource areas or to require lots to be configured in a way that allows such migration. Lot line adjustments may sometimes be appropriate if they facilitate locating physical development further away from hazards or sensitive resources.

Figure 23. Photo depicting the preservation and conservation of open space along an urban-rural boundary. North end of Pismo Beach from 1972 (*left*) to 2002 (*right*). (*Source:* California Coastal Records Project)

Goal: Manage sediment in ways that benefit habitats

C.6 **Identify opportunities for Regional Sediment Management**: Sediment supplies will be important for the long-term sustainability of many beaches and wetland areas. Strategies to maintain or restore natural sediment supplies and to coordinate sediment removal efforts with opportunities for reuse can provide multiple benefits to coastal ecosystems. See Strategy A.19c above for more detail on RSM programs.

C.6a **Restore natural sediment sources to wetlands**: Restoration of natural hydrodynamic systems will help to ensure the ability of wetlands to persist with sea level rise by ensuring that sediment is available for wetland accretion. Such actions may include restoring natural channels in streams and waterways that have been armored or channelized. Organizing and coordinating such efforts may be accomplished through a Regional Sediment Management Plan.

C.6b **Identify opportunities for beneficial reuse of sediment to support wetland restoration**: Consider facilitating the delivery of clean, dredged sediment to areas where former wetlands have subsided or to areas where existing wetlands are or may become sediment-limited as sea levels rise.

Goal: Incorporate sea level rise into habitat management actions

C.7 **Include sea level rise in site-specific evaluations**: Update policies to require site-specific biological evaluations and field observations of coastal habitat to include an evaluation of vulnerability to sea level rise where appropriate. Such an evaluation should consider both topographic features as well as habitat and species sensitivities (for example, sensitivity to inundation and saltwater intrusion).

C.8 Incorporate sea level rise in restoration, creation, or enhancement of coastal habitats: Update policies to require site-specific biological evaluations and field observations of coastal habitat to include an evaluation of vulnerability to sea level rise. Such an evaluation should consider both topographic features as well as habitat and species sensitivities (for example, sensitivity to inundation and saltwater intrusion). Habitat restoration, creation, or enhancement projects should be designed to withstand impacts of sea level rise and adapt to future conditions. As applicable, the LCP should contain policies to ensure restoration and management techniques account for future changes in conditions. CDPs for restoration projects should incorporate sea level rise and provisions to ensure habitats can adapt with changing future conditions.

C.9 Update habitat management plans to address sea level rise: Add policies stating that the effects of sea level rise should be addressed in management plans for coastal habitats. For example, plans should evaluate the full range of sea level rise impacts to coastal habitats, and develop a strategy for managing coastal habitats given changing sea level rise conditions. Existing management plans may need to be updated to add new monitoring and restoration requirements to address sea level rise. The strategies listed below are examples of strategies that could be included in habitat management plans.

C.9a **Use an adaptive management approach in ecosystem management, restoration, or design**: Habitat management plans and/or other habitat projects should establish an adaptive management approach, with clearly defined triggers for adaptive actions. Such an approach would allow for and ensure that coastal habitats are able to migrate and transition with changes in sea level.

Figure 24. Photo depicting habitat protection at Salinas River State Beach. Dunes are roped off to protect Snowy Plover nesting habitat. (*Source:* California Coastal Records Project)

C.10 Pursue strategies to protect ecosystem function under a range of future sea level rise or climate change scenarios: The LCP and/or habitat management plans can recommend coastal habitat management strategies that strive to protect ecosystem function in the future. Strategies include protecting a wide range of ecosystem types, protecting refugia, protecting wildlife and habitat corridors, and establishing methods to monitor ecosystem change over time.

C.10a **Update monitoring requirements for coastal habitats**: As part of the LCP and/or habitat management plans, consider establishing a monitoring protocol and requirements for evaluating sea level rise impacts to coastal habitats over time. Such a protocol would also help identify triggers at which additional adaptation options are necessary.

D. Agricultural Resources

Agriculture is a priority use within the Coastal Act, which mandates that the maximum amount of prime agricultural land shall be protected and maintained (Sections 30231, 30241, 30242). The main goals and Coastal Act policies that relate to agriculture are to:

- Protect the maximum amount of prime agricultural land
- Limit conversion of lands suitable for agriculture to non-agricultural uses
- Minimize impacts to water quality that could result from agricultural practices
- Promote water conservation efforts

Chapter 3 of the Guidance describes the impacts to agricultural resources that may result from sea level rise. Certified LCPs should already have policies and standards to ensure that agricultural resources are protected to the maximum extent feasible. However, LCP policies and standards may need to be updated to address sea level rise hazards. Adaptation options have been developed to support the agricultural protection goals of the Coastal Act through both LCP policies and CDP conditions, and the following strategies cover a range of options for addressing the identified goals of the Coastal Act.

Goal: Protect the maximum amount of prime agricultural land

D.1 Identify and designate areas suitable for agricultural production to replace agricultural production areas that could be lost to sea level rise: Identify any non-sensitive open or developed areas, both within and outside of the Coastal Zone, which could potentially be used to replace agricultural land that is lost to sea level rise. Update LCP designations and/or policies to protect these identified areas for agricultural production and, as applicable, to provide for their conversion to agricultural use. Encourage and support regional coordination as feasible and applicable.

D.1a **Establish SLR-specific agricultural protection program:** Establish a formal program to identify, acquire, incentivize, and manage areas appropriate for new/renewed agricultural use and/or for protection of current and/or future agricultural uses. Such program should target key areas and properties where agricultural conversion threats are highest, and should dovetail with existing agricultural protection programs. Easements and other legal restrictions may be used as part of such program to help limit or restrict development in areas where agricultural land and production are most vulnerable to sea level rise impacts. The program might develop standard language and/or legal documents that can be used for easements or other property restrictions. The program should be flexible enough to be able to be implemented on both a large scale (*e.g.*, though LCP policies and programs) as well as on a smaller scale (*e.g.*, through the CDP process).

D.2 **Protection, maintenance, and adaptation of dikes and levees**: Repairing and maintaining existing flood barriers such as dikes and levees may be a cost-effective way to continue to protect agricultural areas. While some repair and maintenance activities are exempt from the need for a CDP, the repair and maintenance exemption does not apply to repair and maintenance work that is located within an ESHA, within any sand area, within 50 feet of the edge of a coastal bluff or ESHA, or within 20 feet of coastal waters. LCPs could identify opportunities for these kinds of actions and ensure that they are appropriately permitted, with consideration to the environmental protection and restoration goals of the Coastal Act. While landowners have the right to repair and maintain existing legal levees in their current configurations, the Commission and local governments administering LCPs have the authority to regulate, via the CDP process, the proposed methods of repair and maintenance. To raise, reconfigure, enlarge, or widen levees is not repair and maintenance and requires a Coastal Development Permit. Such activities may not be consistent with the Coastal Act or certified LCP, such as in cases involving wetland fill impacts. However, where there are opportunities to restore marine resources and the biological productivity of wetlands and estuaries, it may be possible to permit a dike/levee reconstruction project that provides for substantial restoration.

Goal: Limit conversion of lands suitable for agriculture to non-agricultural uses

D.3 **Limit conversion of agricultural land to other developed land uses**: Develop policies to assure maximum environmentally feasible protection of rural agricultural land, open space, and other coastal resources, including areas that may be considered non-prime agricultural land at this time. Anticipate areas that could become more difficult to farm and identify strategies to avoid or mitigate the potential impacts.

Goal: Minimize impacts to water quality that could result from agricultural practices

D.4 **Include sea level rise in water quality protection policies**: Where needed, coordinate with regional water quality control boards to add policies to reduce water pollution from runoff should agricultural lands become flooded or inundated due to sea level rise.

D.4a **Minimize water quality impacts from flooding of agricultural lands**: Agricultural practices that are designed to minimize water quality impacts, such as those designed to minimize runoff, may need to be updated or enhanced to ensure water quality protection if sea level rise results in more frequent flooding of agricultural lands.

D.4b **Add policies to address saltwater intrusion**: Add policies to protect water supply for priority coastal agriculture, including policies to address saltwater intrusion, such as limits on groundwater withdrawal or diversification of water supplies. Strategies to pump freshwater and/or highly treated wastewater into aquifers to reduce saltwater intrusion should be minimized in areas with limited freshwater resources.

Goal: Promote water conservation efforts

D.5 **Maximize water conservation to protect priority agricultural water supplies**: Saltwater intrusion and other climate change impacts may result in reduced water availability. LCP policies should be updated to establish or enhance standards related to water conservation and/or to identify opportunities for water recycling, dual plumbing systems, and the like. For more information on options such as relocating wells and reducing pumping in sensitive aquifers, see the following section on Water Quality and Water Control Management.

D.6 **Identify alternate water sources for agriculture**: Establish a program to identify alternate water sources for agriculture.

E. Water Quality and Supply

The main water quality protection policy of the Coastal Act requires minimizing the adverse effects of wastewater discharges, runoff, and groundwater depletion in order to protect the biological productivity and quality of coastal waters, as described in Section 30231. The main goals related to water quality include:

- Control runoff and stormwater pollution
- Minimize adverse effects of wastewater discharges and entrainment
- Prevent depletion of groundwater supplies from saltwater intrusion
- Improve long-term water quality through research

Chapter 3 of the Guidance covers the impacts to coastal waters from increased runoff, wastewater discharge and saltwater intrusion into groundwater sources from sea level rise. Adaptation options have been developed to limit the amount of pollutants that enter coastal waters through runoff or discharges.

Goal: Control runoff and stormwater pollution

E.1 **Update water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs)**: Evaluate and update BMPs to account for changes in water quality and supply issues due to sea level rise, as applicable. Updates could include practices to provide greater infiltration/inflow of rainwater, increased stormwater capture and/or water recycling programs, the use of low impact development, improved maintenance procedures for public sewer mains, policies to address impaired private sewer laterals, and other proactive measures.

E.2 **Include sea level rise in stormwater management plans and actions**: Control the amount of pollutants, sediments, and nutrients entering water bodies through precipitation-generated runoff. LCPs should include sea level rise and extreme storms in stormwater management plans and actions. CDPs for stormwater infrastructure should consider sea level rise.

E.2a **Increase capacity of stormwater infrastructure**: Actions to reduce impacts from higher water levels could include widening drainage ditches, improving carrying and storage capacity of tidally-influenced streams, installing larger pipes and culverts, adding pumps, converting culverts to bridges, creating retention and detention basins, and developing contingency plans for extreme events. Encouraging and supporting these types of efforts upstream may also be important.

E.2b **Use green stormwater infrastructure to the maximum extent feasible**: Employ natural, on-site drainage strategies to minimize the amount of stormwater that flows into pipes or conveyance systems. These strategies include low impact development, green roofs, permeable pavements, bioretention (*e.g.*, vegetated

swales, rain gardens) and cisterns. LCPs can include policies that require green infrastructure be used whenever possible *in lieu* of hard structures. Incorporate sea level rise and extreme storms into the design.

E.2c **Retrofit existing development with inadequate stormwater infrastructure**: Identify and prioritize development in low-lying or other at-risk areas with inadequate stormwater infrastructure and take steps to retrofit these systems to better accommodate sea level rise driven changes. Retrofits should incorporate the green infrastructure options detailed in strategy E.2c above as applicable.

Goal: Minimize adverse effects of wastewater discharges and entrainment

E.3 Add policies to address water quality risks from wastewater treatment plants, septic systems, and ocean outfalls: Consider establishing a program to retrofit, relocate, or eliminate ocean outfalls and other wastewater infrastructure deemed at risk. Alternatives include modifications to outfall lines, the use of green infrastructure, and redesign of waste and stormwater systems.

E.3a **Update siting and design policies**: Add policies to ensure that new ocean outfalls, wastewater treatment facilities, and other facilities that could negatively impact water quality if flooded or inundated, are sited and designed to minimize impacts from sea level rise. Avoid construction of new stormwater outfalls and direct stormwater to existing facilities with appropriate treatment and filtration where feasible. Where new outfalls cannot be avoided, plan, site, and design stormwater outfalls to minimize adverse impacts on coastal resources, including consolidation of existing and new outfalls where appropriate. Consolidate new and existing outfalls where appropriate.

E.3b **Retrofit, relocate, or eliminate outfalls deemed "at risk"**: An ocean outfall is a pipeline or tunnel that discharges municipal or industrial wastewater, stormwater, combined sewer overflows, cooling water, or brine effluents from desalination plants to the sea. LCPs should identify areas where sea level rise could affect flow of wastewater from outfalls and lead to backup and inland flooding, and plans should be made to retrofit, relocate, or eliminate these outfalls to prevent damage and impacts to water quality. Additionally, CDPs for new ocean outfalls should consider sea level rise in the design.

E.3c **Reduce or find alternatives for septic systems in hazardous areas**: Flooding, inundation, and changing groundwater dynamics may result in impacts to septic systems, which rely on leach fields for dispersal of wastewater, that could cause water quality impairments. Options to reduce the potential for these impacts by redesigning or eliminating septic systems in hazardous areas should be identified. New development that will rely on septic systems should be limited in hazardous areas.

Goal: Prevent depletion of groundwater supplies from saltwater intrusion

E.4 **Groundwater Management**: Plan and coordinate monitoring, operation, and administration of a groundwater basin or portion of a groundwater basin with the goal of fostering long-term sustainability of the resource. The LCP can add policies that specify limits or establish other standards for the use of groundwater and sensitive aquifers. These policies should be made in accordance with other regional water planning efforts, such as Integrated Regional Water Plans as well as relevant state water policies. CDPs involving the use of groundwater should address groundwater management issues.

E.4a **Add policies to address saltwater intrusion into aquifers**: Consider adding policies that establish a long-term strategy for addressing saltwater intrusion in aquifers, including limiting development that would use sensitive aquifers as applicable. For some areas of the state, additional information is needed on the site-specific impacts of sea level rise on aquifers. For these areas, the LCP could identify the local information needs and promote the establishment of a research program to increase understanding of the vulnerability of coastal aquifers.

E.4b **Limit groundwater extraction from shallow aquifers**: Groundwater extraction from shallow aquifers can increase susceptibility to saltwater intrusion. Regulating development to limit or prevent extraction and avoid overdraft from vulnerable aquifers can reduce the impacts of saltwater intrusion and preserve fresh groundwater supplies. LCPs or CDPs can add restrictions to the use of aquifers susceptible to saltwater intrusion and can encourage measures to recharge shallow aquifers that are depleted.

E.4c **Relocate wells and water intake facilities**: Identify opportunities to relocate wells and water intake facilities away from hazards and/or areas where saltwater intrusion may be a problem.

E.4d **Restrict development of new wells in sensitive areas**: Require new water wells to be sited away from areas where saltwater intrusion could occur.

E.4e **Limit development that relies on vulnerable water supplies**: Limit or restrict new development in areas that are dependent on water supplies that are or will become susceptible to saltwater intrusion.

E.4f **Ensure adequate long term water supplies:** When siting and designing new development, ensure that adequate and sustainable water sources are available for the lifetime of the development and suitable for the intended use of the development, considering potential impacts of sea level rise and saltwater intrusion upon groundwater supplies.

Goal: Improve long-term water quality through research

E.5 Identify research and monitoring needs to more precisely understand local issues: Research programs may be established to analyze the particular local challenges related to water quality and supply as a result of sea level rise. Opportunities for innovative solutions to these challenges should be identified.

E.5a **Clearly define areas at risk**: The LCP should include an updated inventory of potential pollutant sources due to sea level rise, including toxic waste sites, ocean outfalls and wastewater treatment facilities at risk of inundation, as well as aquifers and wells at risk of saltwater intrusion. Policies may also be added to prioritize low-lying contaminated sites for remediation and restoration.

F. Archaeological and Paleontological Resources

The Coastal Act provides for the protection of archaeological and paleontological resources, stating in Section 30244 that:

> "Where development would adversely impact archaeological or paleontological resources as identified by the State Historic Preservation Officer, reasonable mitigation measures shall be required."

Chapter 3 of the Guidance discusses the impacts to archaeological and paleontological resources that might result from sea level rise. Certified LCPs should already have policies and standards to ensure that these resources are protected to the maximum extent feasible, however, such policies and standards may need to be updated to consider sea level rise hazards. The following strategies cover a range of options for addressing the identified goals of the Coastal Act.

Goal: Protect archaeological and paleontological resources

F.1 Add policies to protect archeological and paleontological resources from sea level rise: Add policies to require site-specific evaluation of potential sea level rise impacts to archeological and paleontological resources on a development site. The LCP can also add requirements that a monitoring program and plan be established as a condition of approval for development located on a site with artifacts vulnerable to sea level rise. Adaptation or protection strategies used may depend on the significance of the archaeological resources in question.

F.1a **Consult with relevant tribes for guidance:** If resources are at risk, the appropriate entity or Native American tribe(s) should be contacted to develop a coordinated management plan for artifacts. See, for example, the *California Natural Resources Agency Final Tribal Consultation Policy* for additional guidance.

F.1b **Coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO):** In line with the provisions of the Coastal Act, work with the State Historic Preservation Officer to identify actions to protect archaeological and paleontological resources.

G. Scenic and Visual Resources

The scenic value of the coast is a resource of public importance. As noted in Section 30251 of the Coastal Act, development shall be sited and designed to:

> "Protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural landforms…and to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas."

As stated in Chapter 3 of the Guidance, some options to address rising sea levels, such as elevating structures or utilizing seawalls or bluff retention devices, have the potential to alter or degrade the visual character of an area. Certified LCPs should already have policies and standards to ensure scenic and visual resources are protected to the maximum extent feasible, but these may need to be updated to consider sea level rise hazards. Coastal regions with scenic overlays or designated scenic corridors, or those areas designated as scenic in the California Coastal Preservation and Recreation Plan in particular should pay close attention to actions that could be used to minimize risks to development. The following adaptation options address some of the methods for protecting the scenic qualities of the coast.

Goal: Protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas

G.1 **Establish design standards to protect visual resources**: Update and/or add design standards to ensure that adaptation measures protect visual resources while minimizing hazards. Adaptation strategies such as shoreline armoring or elevation techniques should be designed such that the visuals are subordinate to, and in character with, the surrounding visual resources of an area.

G.1a **Establish standards for the use of caissons or other means of elevating structures:** Ensure that the use of caissons or other elevation techniques do not result in negative visual impacts. Develop policies regarding where elevation of structures may be allowable, and establish standards guiding the use of these techniques. Ensure that the appearance of caissons will not detract from the scenic character of an area if or when they become visible as a result of erosion or other processes.

G.1b **Maintain height limitations in scenic areas**: Avoid modifications to height limits in scenic areas and provide for options to modify roof-lines or elevate the lowest flood elevation for flood protection in a manner that is consistent with scenic character. In some cases it may be appropriate to update height limitations to allow for elevation in response to sea level rise hazards. However, such decisions will require trade-offs and will need to strike a balance in terms of adapting to sea level rise and protecting visual resources and community character in line with the requirements of the Coastal Act.

G.1c **Develop or redevelop property to be safe from hazards without impairing scenic resources**: Emphasize the use of adaptation strategies that will not impact visual resources. Such strategies may include short-term retrofits with plans for longer term relocation or removal.

G.1d **Establish new scenic communities**: Designate areas with significant visual resources that could be negatively impacted by adaptation responses (*e.g.*, due to seawalls or "spider" homes) as scenic communities with special protections. Establish standards in LCPs to specifically protect visual resources in these areas.

Figure 25. Photo depicting protection of visual resources and public access. A seawall visually blends in with the natural bluff while surfing access is also provided at Pleasure Point, Santa Cruz (2013). (*Source:* California Coastal Records Project)