

Chapter 5: Circulation Element



Land use and transportation planning must be complementary. The planned circulation system of roads, pedestrian routes, bikeways, and other modes of transportation must take into account future development. At the same time, planning for future development must consider transportation needs and capacities. Accordingly, this plan describes existing and proposed major transportation routes and public facilities that are closely coordinated to support land use.

This chapter implements the goals, objectives and policies of the Circulation Element in Framework for Planning, Coastal Zone, a part of the LCP. That element, together with this chapter, constitutes the Circulation Element of the general plan for Los Osos.

~~Additional documents that address transportation and circulation in Los Osos include the following:~~

This chapter also includes information and provisions from the following documents:

- The Los Osos Circulation Study, first adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1994 (updated [annually/periodically](#))
- The 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) & Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) to be adopted by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments

- The County Bikeways Plan, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1994 and subsequently amended
- The Parks and Recreation Element of the County General Plan, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2006
- The revised Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Estero Area Plan Update, 2003 [information from a new Environmental Impact Report for this Community Plan will be incorporated into the Public Hearing Draft Community Plan as needed]
- The 2008 Draft Los Osos Valley Road Corridor Study
- The 2013 Park and Ride Lot Development Study adopted by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments

This chapter deals with circulation issues, including those relating to coastal access. For more information on coastal access, please refer to Chapter 6, Coastal Access, in this Plan.

The California Complete Streets Act (2011) requires that jurisdictions address the needs of all users of public roadways when updating General Plan documents. Users of public roadways include motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, seniors, movers of commercial goods, and users of public transportation. Planning a “complete street” means taking the safety, convenience, and comfort of all of these users into account. Features of a “complete street” could include:

- Sidewalks
- Shared-use paths
- Bicycle lanes
- Paved shoulders
- Street trees and landscaping
- Planting strips
- Accessible curb ramps
- Crosswalks
- Pedestrian signals
- Signs
- Street furniture
- Bicycle parking facilities

Complete Streets

“**Complete Streets**” are designed for *everybody*, not just the motorist. The principle behind complete streets is that **all users**, regardless of age, ability, or transportation mode should be able to **safely access** the public street system. Concerns for safety, particularly on high-speed roads with no bicycle lanes or sidewalks, are often cited as reasons people choose not to cycle or walk.

BENEFITS OF COMPLETE STREETS:

- Safety
- Public Health – increased walking and cycling.
- Aesthetics – a visually pleasing public environment

5.1 Circulation Issues

5.1.1. Existing Deficiencies

Existing circulation deficiencies in Los Osos are identified in the *Los Osos Circulation Study*. In addition; Appendix F contains a discussion of both County-identified deficiencies and deficiencies identified by the community Appendix F.1.

Table 5-1, below, summarizes the circulation deficiencies identified by the County:

Table 5-1: Circulation Deficiencies Identified by the County	
Location	Deficiency
Los Osos Valley Road	<i>9th Street to Pine Avenue:</i> roadway capacity; pedestrian amenities.
Ramona Avenue	Capacity and alignment of intersections at 4 th and 9 th Streets.
Doris Avenue	<i>Rosina Drive to South Court:</i> unimproved roadway segment.
Pine Avenue	Pedestrian obstacles, narrow right-of-way.

Other deficiencies and perceived problems have been identified by the community (see Table 5-2 below), but they cannot be measured against an engineering standard. Instead, they are based on people's perceptions, which affect how people make their transportation choices. Those deficiencies may also need to be addressed

Table 5-2: Circulation Deficiencies Identified by the Community	
<i>Specific deficiencies identified by the community</i>	
Location	Deficiency
Los Osos Valley Road	<i>Los Osos Creek to 9th Street:</i> Traffic speed; unsafe pedestrian crossings.
<i>General deficiencies identified by the community</i>	
Deficiency	Explanation
Traffic speed	Traffic routinely exceeds posted speed limits on many streets such as Santa Ysabel Avenue, South Bay Boulevard, Los Osos Valley Road, Bayview Heights Drive, and Rodman Drive.
Unpaved roads	Unpaved roads cause inefficient traffic patterns, create excessive dust, and discourage bicycle and pedestrian travel.
Pedestrian and bicycle facilities	There is a lack of adequate and convenient system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities to connect residential areas, schools, and commercial areas.
Regional transit service	Ridership on buses is low, service is infrequent, bus stops are inaccessible and/or unsheltered, and few incentives exist for transit ridership.

5.1.2. Future Needs

In addition to improvements needed to correct existing deficiencies, other street and intersection improvements will be needed as the community grows. Some examples are shown below. Some more specifics are given in Section 5.2, Circulation Improvements.

- A. A continuous center turn lane on Los Osos Valley Road west of Palisades Avenue.
- B. A north-south connection west of the central business district between Los Osos Valley Road and the El Moro and Baywood commercial areas.
- C. Ramona Avenue as a proposed east-west connection between South Bay Boulevard, the west end of the El Moro Area, and the Cuesta-by-the-Sea area.
- D. Signalization at several intersections along Los Osos Valley Road and South Bay Boulevard as noted in the *Los Osos Circulation Study*.
- E. Preservation of rights-of-way and offers of dedication for road easements and other accessways in order to preserve public access to the bay front and public recreation areas, and to complete and maintain the circulation system. This is needed in order to provide maximum flexibility in responding to the future transportation needs of the community.
- F. Center landscaped medians on Los Osos Valley Road from South Bay Boulevard to west of Bush Drive to reduce travel speeds, enhance pedestrian crossing and manage road intersection access.
- G. Improve pedestrian circulation along Pine Avenue with parking restrictions securing additional right of way for widening improvements, undergrounding utilities, relocating encroachments, or using the proposed Broderson Avenue Class I trail alignment as the preferred pedestrian route.

5.2 Circulation Improvements

In order to meet the needs of the community as it grows, a set of integrated transportation improvements is identified. Road improvements are designed to serve the amount of vehicular traffic that is projected to occur in the future at buildout under this plan.

Planned transportation improvements are illustrated by the circulation maps at the end of this chapter. One map shows existing and proposed roads that are classified by their function as principal arterial, arterial, and collector roads. The other map shows major existing and proposed pedestrian and equestrian trails and bikeways. It also shows the locations of existing and proposed coastal access. For a complete identification of proposed roads, bikeways and equestrian trails, please refer to the Los Osos Circulation Study, the County Bikeways Plan and the Parks and Recreation Element.

In order to provide a balanced mix of all modes of transportation, this plan provides for improving not only streets and intersections, but also public transit, pedestrian routes, bikeways, and equestrian trails. For example, the plan emphasizes completing the existing road network, improving existing streets and intersections, substantially expanding bikeways and pedestrian trails, providing equestrian trails, and improving both transit service and access to transit.

5.2.1. Roads

This subsection describes some of the major planned road improvements, organized by the type or function of the roadway. The planned improvements will help complete the transportation network and accommodate the expected amount of growth under this plan. For additional requirements and details, refer to the *Los Osos Circulation Study*, which contains a complete, prioritized listing of planned roadway, bikeway and intersection improvements to be funded with road impact fees.

Projects funded by road impact fees are prioritized ~~in order of anticipated first by the date that a capacity deficiency is expected to occur, second by safety near schools and third by other safety issues.~~ For projects funded by the County roads budget, ~~the order of funding priority is as follows: 1) maintenance, 2) safety, 3) betterments, and 4) all other projects. is the first consideration, followed by maintenance.~~

A. Arterial, Collector, and Local Roads

Table 5-3 summarizes the needed circulation improvements to roads in the community of Los Osos. Further discussion of specific improvements is contained in Appendix F.2.

B. Los Osos Valley Road Corridor

On July 24, 2007, the Board of Supervisors approved preparation of the Los Osos Valley Road Corridor Study. The study was developed to define a specific set of guidelines and serve as an overall master plan that will guide future circulation improvements within the Los Osos Valley Road right-of-way between the Los Osos Creek bridge and Bush Drive. Community meetings were held with the Los Osos Advisory Council (LOCAC), its Visioning and Transportation Circulation Committees, the general public, and County Public Works. These meetings resulted in release of the community-sponsored Draft Los Osos Valley Road Corridor Study in November of 2008.

The study's recommendations are reflected in Table 5-3 and are discussed in further detail in Appendix F.2. They seek to strike a balance between maximizing traffic flow for passers-through and providing for the safety and convenience of pedestrians, cyclists and local traffic on this road that serves the central business district.

C. Traffic Calming

Residents in Los Osos have shown interest in a comprehensive approach to slow-down traffic in residential and commercial neighborhoods. Slower traffic can make neighborhoods safer, quieter, more conducive to walking and bicycling, and more livable, with a greater sense of community. A variety of "traffic calming" measures can be used to slow traffic, including reducing widths of existing streets and designing narrower streets in new land divisions. Some measures involve landscaping, which can also make neighborhoods more attractive. Specific traffic calming measures may be ~~considered for approved approval~~ by the County Public Works Department.

Roadway Types

ARTERIAL – Roads that carry a large volume of traffic between population centers and principal arterial roads. (e.g. highways).

COLLECTOR – Roads that enable traffic to move from local streets to arterials and activity centers.

LOCAL – Low capacity roads that provide primary access to adjacent parcels.

Table 5-3: Needed Circulation Improvements	
<i>Arterial Roads</i>	
Los Osos Valley Road <i>Corridor-wide</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center medians in the downtown corridor Traffic calming measures
<i>Doris Avenue to Palisades Avenue</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widen and provide a continuous center left turn lane Multi-use trail (north side)
<i>Bush Drive to Sunset Drive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised median Right turn deceleration lane at Bush Drive Traffic median to restrict left turns at Bush Drive Synchronize traffic signals Pedestrian striping/pavers at Bayview Heights Drive and 10th Street Sunset Drive intersection improvements
<u><i>At Sunset Drive</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Restrict left turns out from the side streets with traffic control devices as approved by Public Works.</u>
<i>Sunset Drive to South Bay Boulevard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic signal and intersection improvements at Fairchild Way. Synchronize traffic signals Pedestrian striping/pavers at South Bay Boulevard “Gateway feature” at South Bay Boulevard
<i>South Bay Boulevard to Los Osos Creek</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian trail
<i>Within the CBD</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streetscape improvements
South Bay Boulevard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intersection improvements at Los Osos Valley Road Future intersection with Ramona Avenue extension Multi-use trail (east side)
<u><i>At Pismo</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Restrict left turns out from the side streets with traffic control devices as approved by Public Works.</u>
<i>Collector Roads</i>	
Ramona Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realign intersection at 4th Street Complete roadway from 10th Street to South Bay Boulevard
Ravenna Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend between Los Osos Valley Road and Ramona Avenue as development occurs, <u>if needed and warranted for the circulation system (as determined by Public Works).</u>
Skyline Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete roadway between Doris and Pine Avenues, <u>if needed for the circulation system (as determined by Public Works).</u> Extend the street eastward to Palisades Avenue, <u>if needed and warranted for the circulation system (as determined by Public Works).</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire right-of-way and extend the street eastward from Palisades Avenue to Nipomo Avenue (at 7th Street) as development occurs
Doris Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete roadway from Rosina Avenue to South Court
Fairchild Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signalize intersection with Los Osos Valley Road Extend the street northward to Nipomo Avenue. if needed and warranted for the circulation system (as determined by Public Works).
Local Roads	
Van Beurden Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the street westerly to provide access for nearby parcels
Baywood Park grid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve local roads to complete the established grid system

Figure 5-1: Los Osos Valley Road – Cross Section with Median

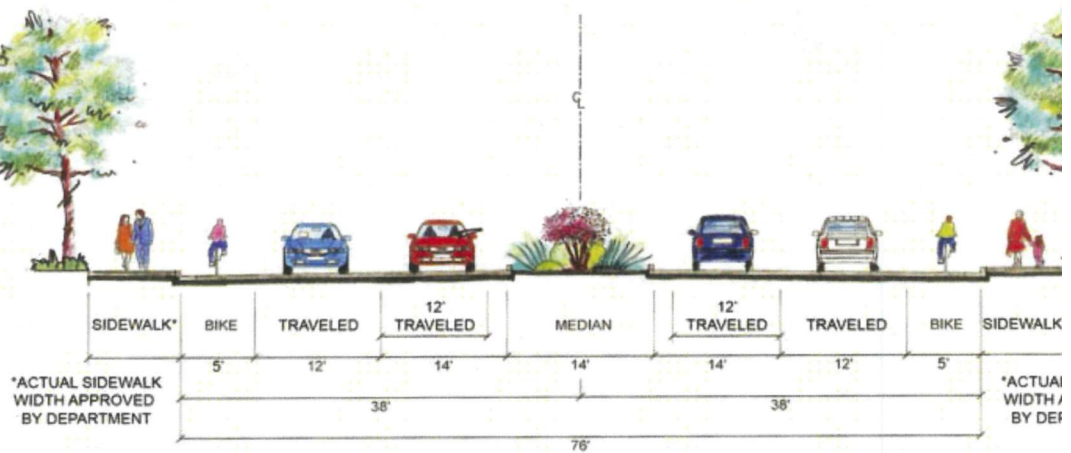
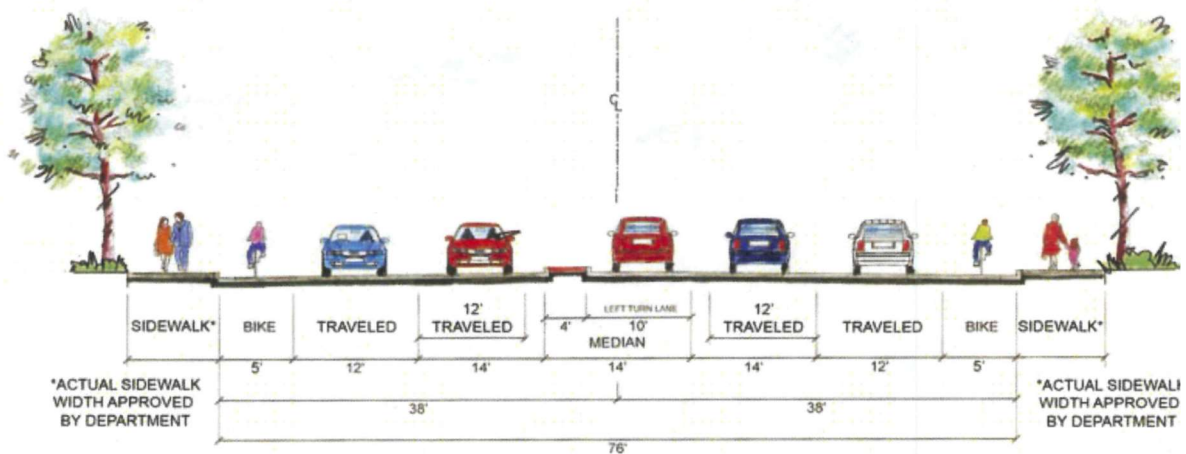


Figure 5-2: Los Osos Valley Road – Cross Section with Left Turn Lane



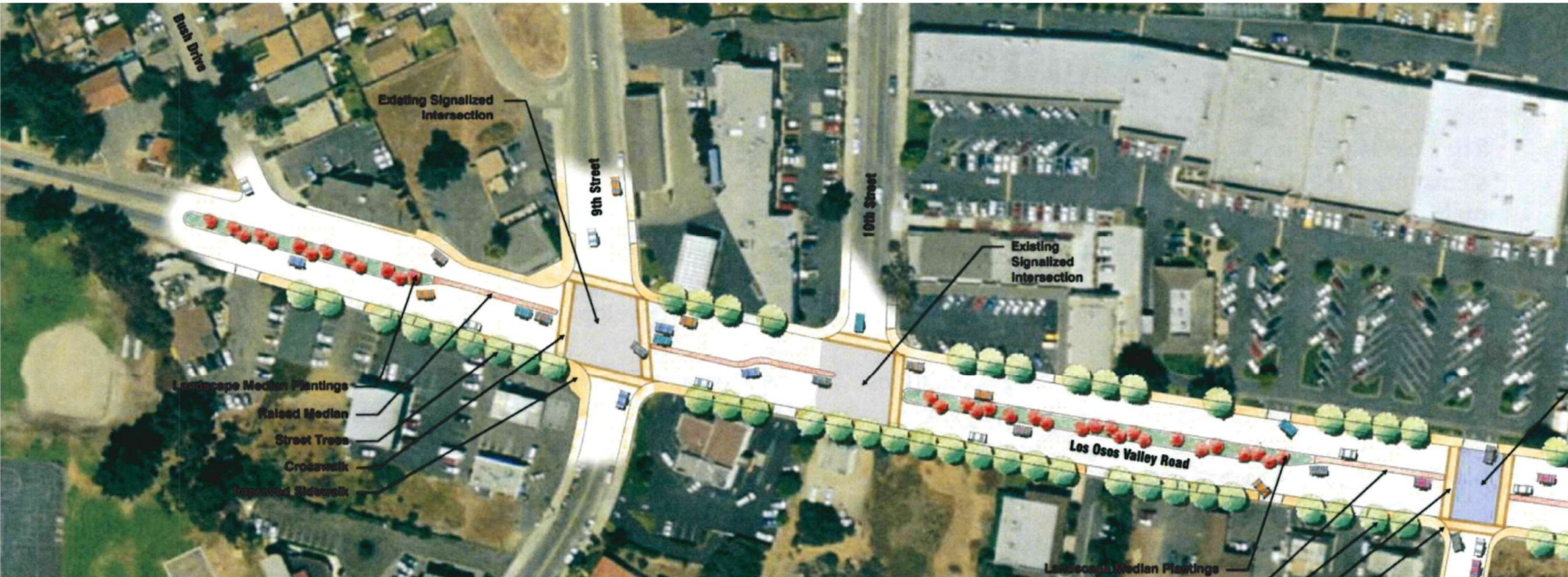
D. Trees

Many residential and commercial areas lack property fronting trees, which can greatly enhance neighborhood appearance, provide wildlife habitat, moderate the climate, and reduce energy consumption. Existing pine trees are being attacked by the pine pitch canker disease, which may virtually destroy the urban pine forest in a short time. In order to prevent a loss of tree cover and expand the urban forest, tree planting is required with new development and land divisions. In addition, the community should pursue an aggressive tree planting program immediately.

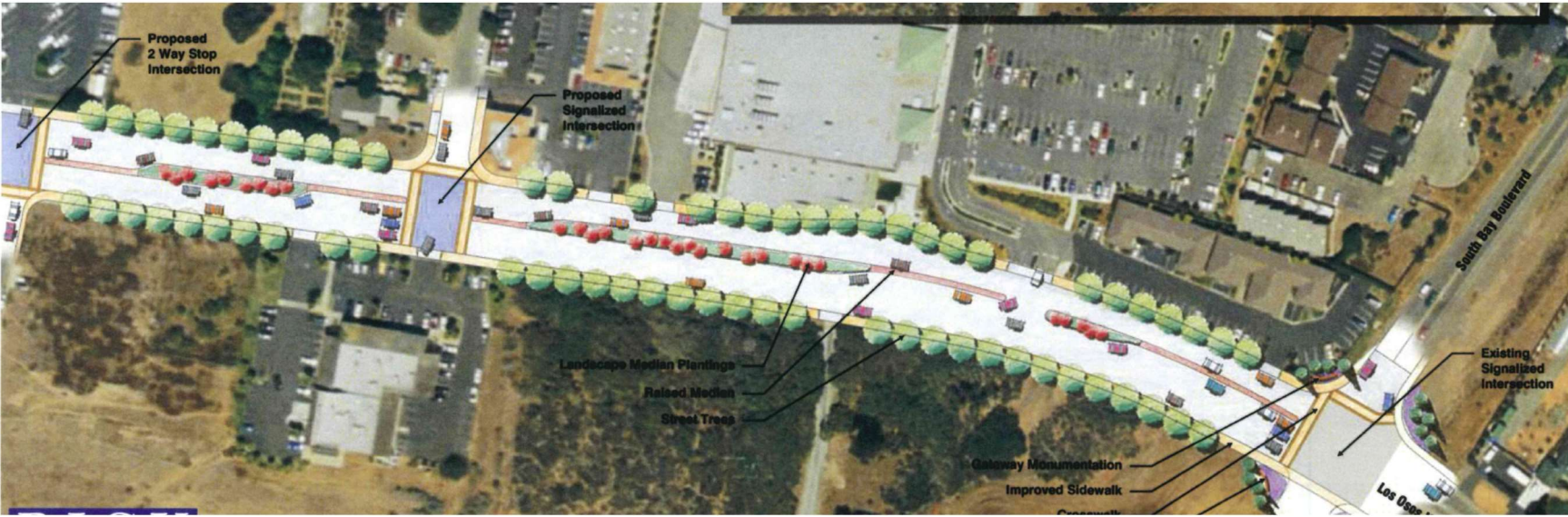
Improperly located trees may impede [roadway/driver](#) sight distance and their roots may cause damage to road and sidewalk improvements. Left unmaintained, trees and other vegetation may become an eyesore or hazardous to the public. Therefore, prior to planting within the right-of-way, an encroachment permit must be ~~issued by~~[obtained from](#) the County Public Works Department. The permit provisions will ensure correct siting of the tree and establish the ongoing maintenance responsibly, typically assigned to the fronting property owner.

Figure 5-3: Illustration of Los Osos Valley Road Corridor Improvements

Western Segment – Bush Drive to Sunset Drive



Eastern Segment – Sunset Drive to South Bay Boulevard



5.2.2. Bicycle, Pedestrian and Equestrian Facilities

This plan places great importance on development of alternative means of travel as a way of providing “complete streets” for all users of public roadways. For a complete identification of proposed improvements and more details, please refer to the Parks and Recreation Element and the County Bikeways Plan. The current recommendations of those plans are generally reflected in the following discussion, but recommendations may change as those plans are periodically updated. The maps in Chapter 6 depict existing and proposed coastal access.

A. Bikeways

There are three classes of bikeways. Class I “bicycle paths” are completely separated from roadways and are sometimes in an exclusive corridor. In Los Osos, these paths will also be designed for pedestrians. Class II “bicycle lanes” are found alongside vehicle lanes in the roadway. Class III “bicycle routes” are used on low volume streets that are suitable for cyclists and are designated by signs only.

The County Bikeways Plan includes an extensive network of community bikeways. Class I paths are planned along some “paper street” rights-of-way and several existing and proposed roads. Class II bicycle lanes are planned for several roads. Class III bicycle routes are planned for several low-volume local streets in order to encourage bicycles to use those streets as parallel routes to the major arterials and collectors in the community.

B. Pedestrian Facilities

This plan emphasizes the importance of providing coastal access and making Los Osos pedestrian-friendly, especially within the central business district and Baywood commercial area. This can be accomplished through land use planning and design (see Chapter 7) and by providing for interconnected systems of sidewalks, trails and other pedestrian routes.

Pedestrians will be able to use Class I bicycle/pedestrian paths (see the County Bikeways Plan). In addition, sidewalks or other pedestrian paths will be provided in new land divisions and with multi-family and commercial/office development. The proposed improvement of several street-ends will enhance coastal access. In addition, a proposed system of riding and hiking trails will improve pedestrian access within the community and to the coast (see the following section, Multi-Use Trails).

C. Multi-Use Trails

An interconnected system of trails is recommended to provide access to the bay and link public and private recreation facilities in the community with Montaña de Oro State Park. Most of the proposed trails are on public property, some cross private property. Existing rights-of-way along the formerly proposed extension of South Bay Boulevard should be preserved for potential use as a trail that could connect with trail corridors to the east and west. This could provide an opportunity for a continuous trail(s) between the eastern portion of Los Osos and Montaña de Oro State Park. Another trail should connect the western terminus of Highland Drive with Pecho Valley Road.

Trails should be designed and constructed to protect environmentally sensitive habitat; in particular, creek beds should be protected from equestrian use during low-flow periods. Trail planning should include management plans, with provisions for interpretive facilities where appropriate, to assure that trails will be managed, monitored and maintained to protect environmentally sensitive habitat.

5.2.3. Public Transit

Public transit is an essential part of the transportation system. An effective public transit system reduces automobile dependency by offering viable alternatives to automobile travel, including the use of several means of transportation for a given trip.

The following are the recommended transit improvements:

- A. Increase the Frequency and Hours of Service, Areas Served, and Destinations Served.** Examples include: providing twice-per-hour service for the Los Osos bus loop; daily express buses throughout the day to Morro Bay, Cuesta College, Cal Poly, and San Luis Obispo; and service to currently unserved neighborhoods. Bus routes should be carefully determined so that future road work can take potential traffic calming measures into account with design.
- B. Provide a more appropriately located, well designed and easily accessible park and ride lot.** Existing park and ride lots have been identified by SLOCOG and published in its 2013 Park and Ride Study. This study also provides recommendations on securing new Park and Ride sites that could be implemented by the community.
- C. Improve the Performance of Transit Service.** Examples include:
 - 1. Identify key focus points with regional transit access for large buses with passenger amenities (schedule and route information, shelters, benches) and minimize the costly deployment of regional transit buses along local, narrow streets without sidewalks.
 - 2. Provide a permanent park and ride lot, mostly for ridesharing.
 - 3. Provide a future transfer node between the South Bay and Morro Bay Dial-A-Ride vans to minimize the need for multiple transfers to and from regional buses.
 - 4. Integrate local transit with school buses.
- D. Assure Safe and Convenient Access to ADA-Compliant Bus Stops.** Examples include providing bus shelters, wheelchair ramps, lighting, secure bike racks at the park and ride lot, and landscaped walkways to bus stops.

Other recommendations include improving public transportation awareness and education, improving passenger comfort and convenience, and improving reliability.

5.3 Other Strategies to Reduce Auto Dependency

5.3.1. Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Traffic congestion and its environmental effects are increasing. At the same time, we are beginning to recognize that it is increasingly infeasible, both economically and environmentally, to simply continue building more roads and adding more lanes to solve the problem. As a result, more attention is being given to various measures to reduce the demand for automobile travel. Such measures are called transportation demand management, or TDM. TDM is important, because if TDM measures are not implemented, the other circulation improvements recommended in this plan will not be as effective.

Many TDM measures need to be implemented not only where people live, but also where they work. Thus, to be most effective, TDM must be implemented at a regional level. Nevertheless, many actions can be taken at the local level as included in this plan.

The following are examples of types of TDM measures. Some may be most effective if implemented throughout the region.

- A. **Marketing and Commuter Information Programs** provide information about carpools, vanpools, and other alternatives to single-occupant automobile travel.
- B. **Transit and Ridesharing Incentives** make carpooling, riding the bus, walking, and bicycling more attractive. Incentives may include preferential carpool or vanpool parking, various employer subsidies for vanpooling and transit use, and other financial incentives.
- C. **Transit Service Improvements** can make transit use more attractive. Examples are increasing the number of daily bus trips and the frequency of service, adjusting routes to better serve riders, improving reliability of bus schedules, making it safer and more convenient to get to bus stops, and reducing fares.
- D. **Parking Management Programs** apply primarily at major employment centers such as the City of San Luis Obispo and Cal Poly State University. They discourage single-occupant automobile travel by limiting the supply of free parking.
- E. **Alternative Work Schedules** can reduce peak-hour traffic. They include 4-day work weeks, flexible schedules that accommodate carpools, staggered work hours, and telecommuting.
- F. **Land Use** and circulation policies, standards and programs are included in this plan to help reduce auto dependency and offer more transportation choices. Examples include emphasizing infill development within compact communities, offering incentives for mixed use development, providing for minimum multi-family densities, encouraging pedestrian-oriented development through development and design standards, and encouraging more employment opportunities.

Consideration should be given to the following land use planning measures, which can also help reduce auto dependency:

- Reduce parking requirements and establish maximum amounts of parking as alternatives to auto travel become more available.
- Increase opportunities for neighborhood shopping by creating additional neighborhood-serving retail commercial in convenient locations.

5.4 Sea Level Rise and Circulation

Sea Level Rise and Circulation. The circulation system of Los Osos, including roads, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian and public accessways may be increasingly vulnerable as sea level rises. The County should pursue the assessment of the vulnerability of the circulation system to support the development of new strategies and public works investments to minimize impacts to circulation due to projected sea level rise (see Program CIR-5.

Figure 5-4: Circulation Plan

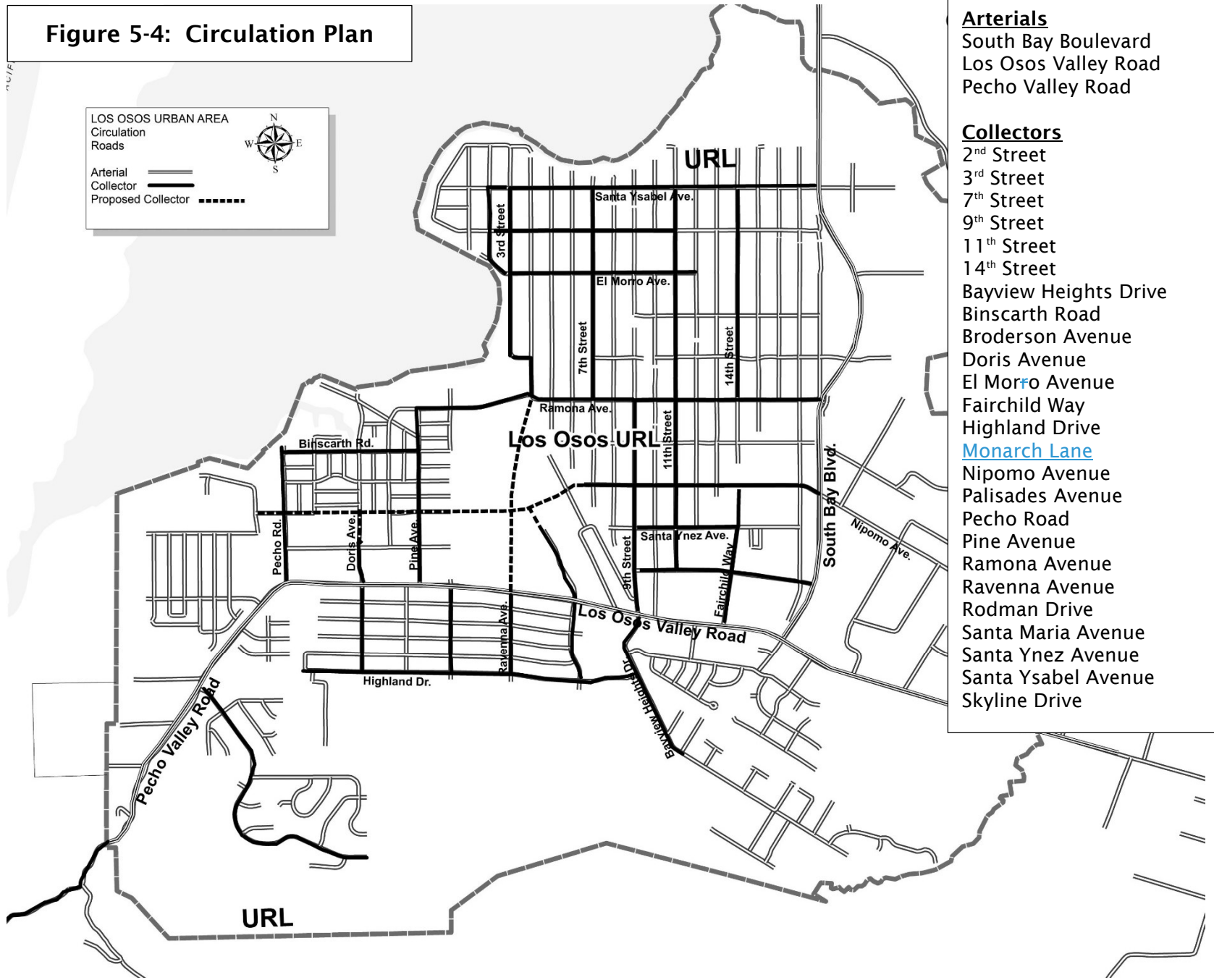


Figure 5-5: Bikeways

LOS OSOS Bikeways Plan

Existing Class I	
Proposed Class I	
Existing Class II	
Proposed Class II	
Existing Class III	
Proposed Class III	
URL Boundary	

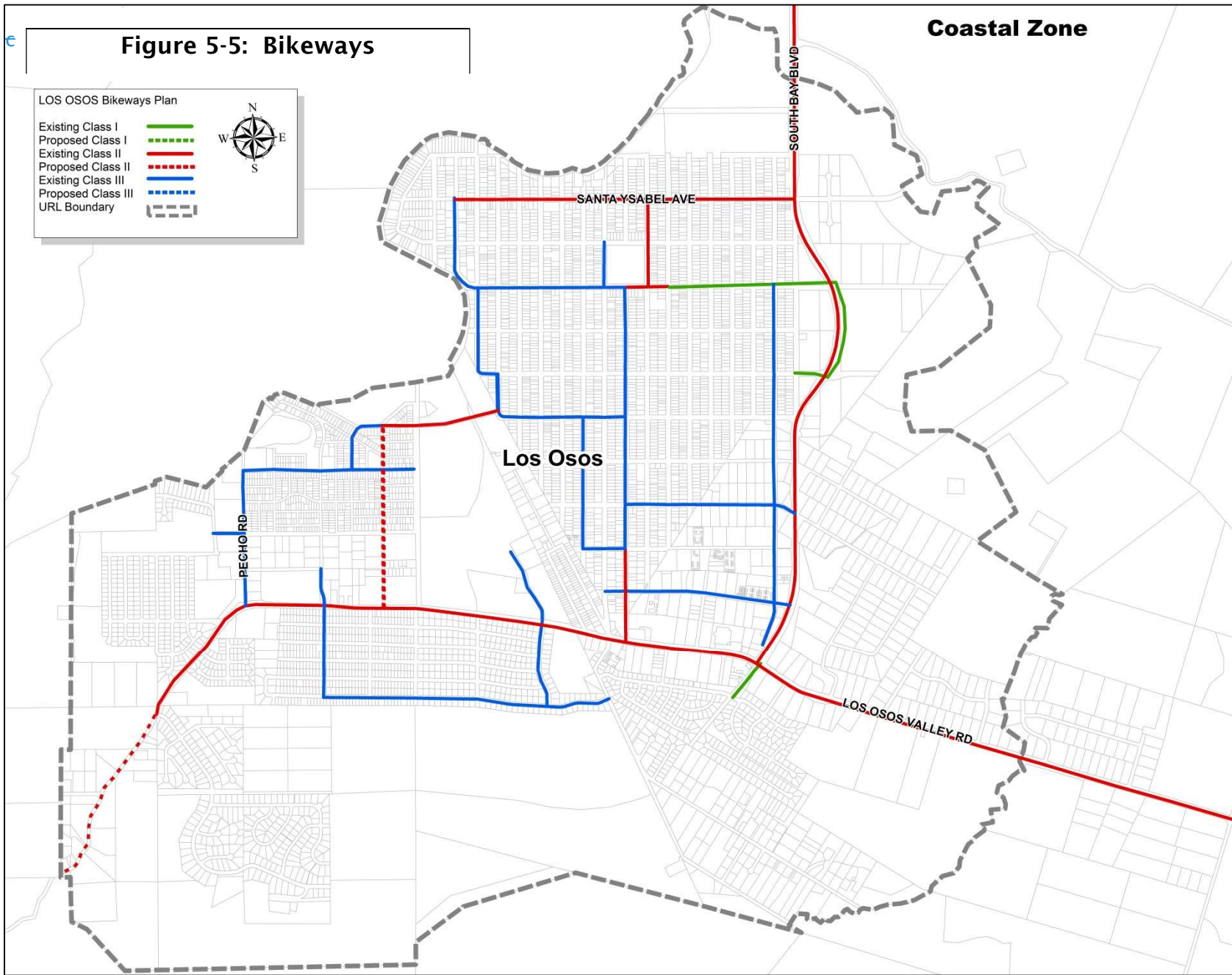


Figure 5-6: Trails and Trail Corridors

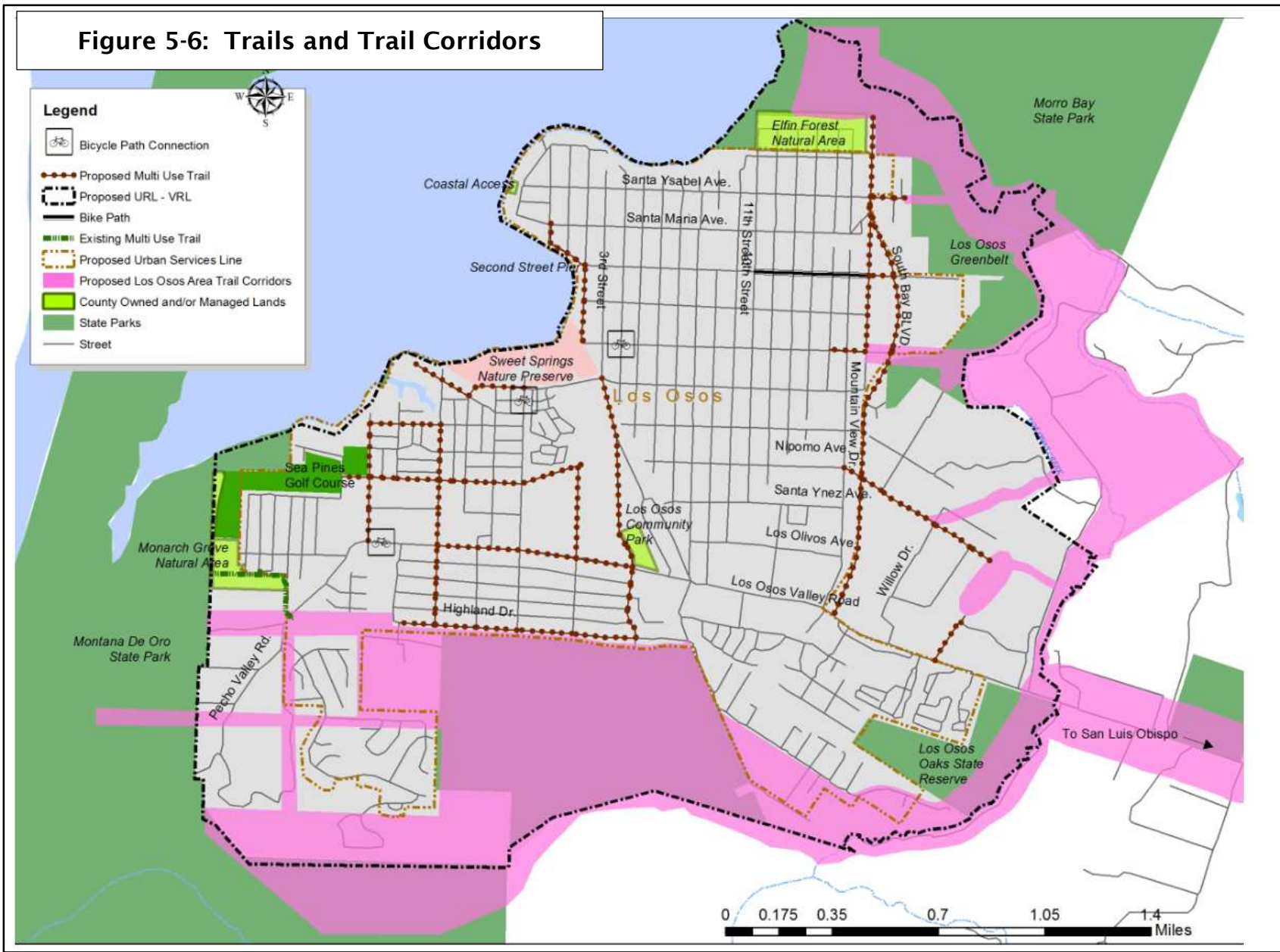
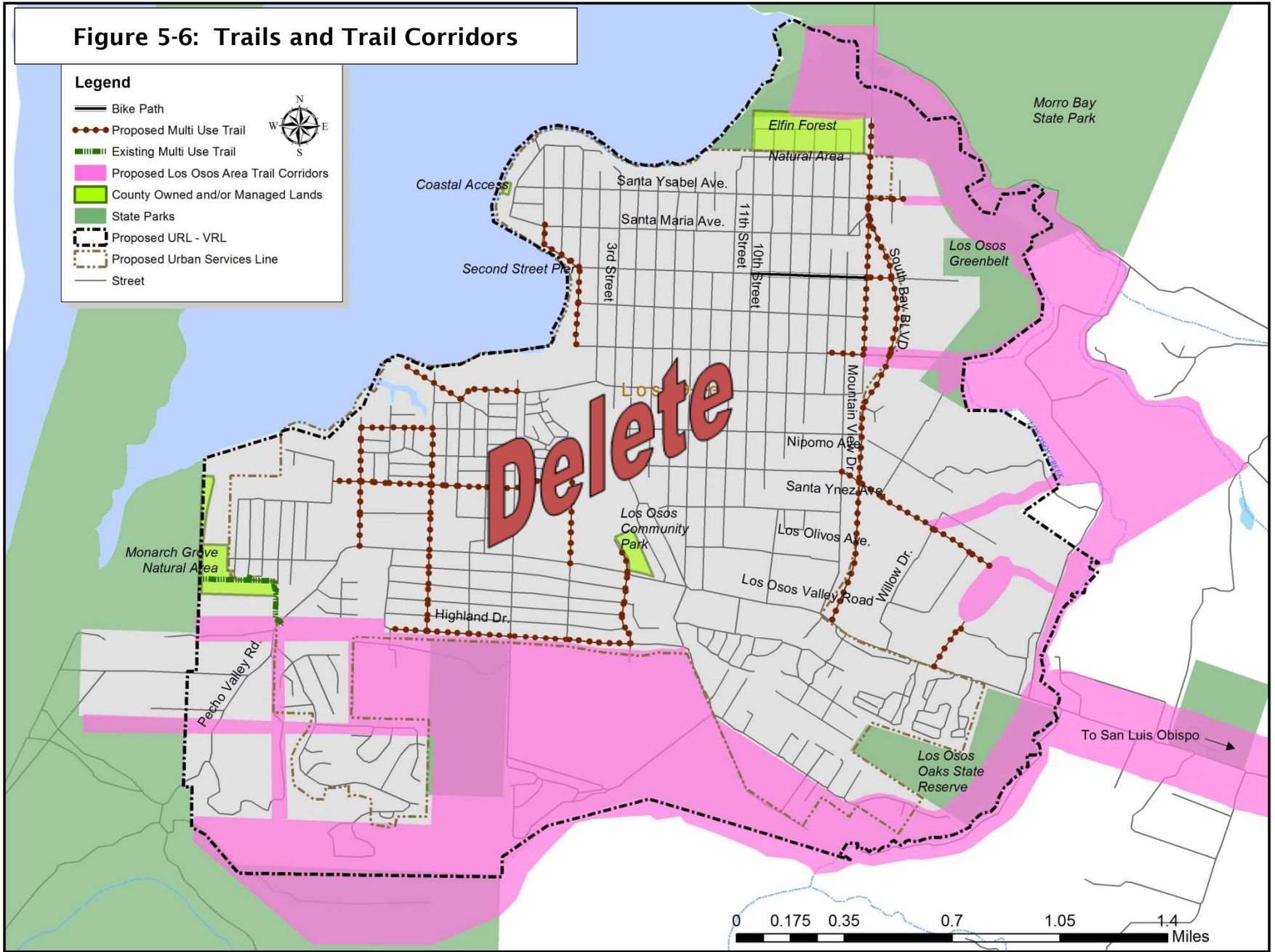


Figure 5-6: Trails and Trail Corridors

Legend

-  Bike Path
-  Proposed Multi Use Trail
-  Existing Multi Use Trail
-  Proposed Los Osos Area Trail Corridors
-  County Owned and/or Managed Lands
-  State Parks
-  Proposed URL - VRL
-  Proposed Urban Services Line
-  Street



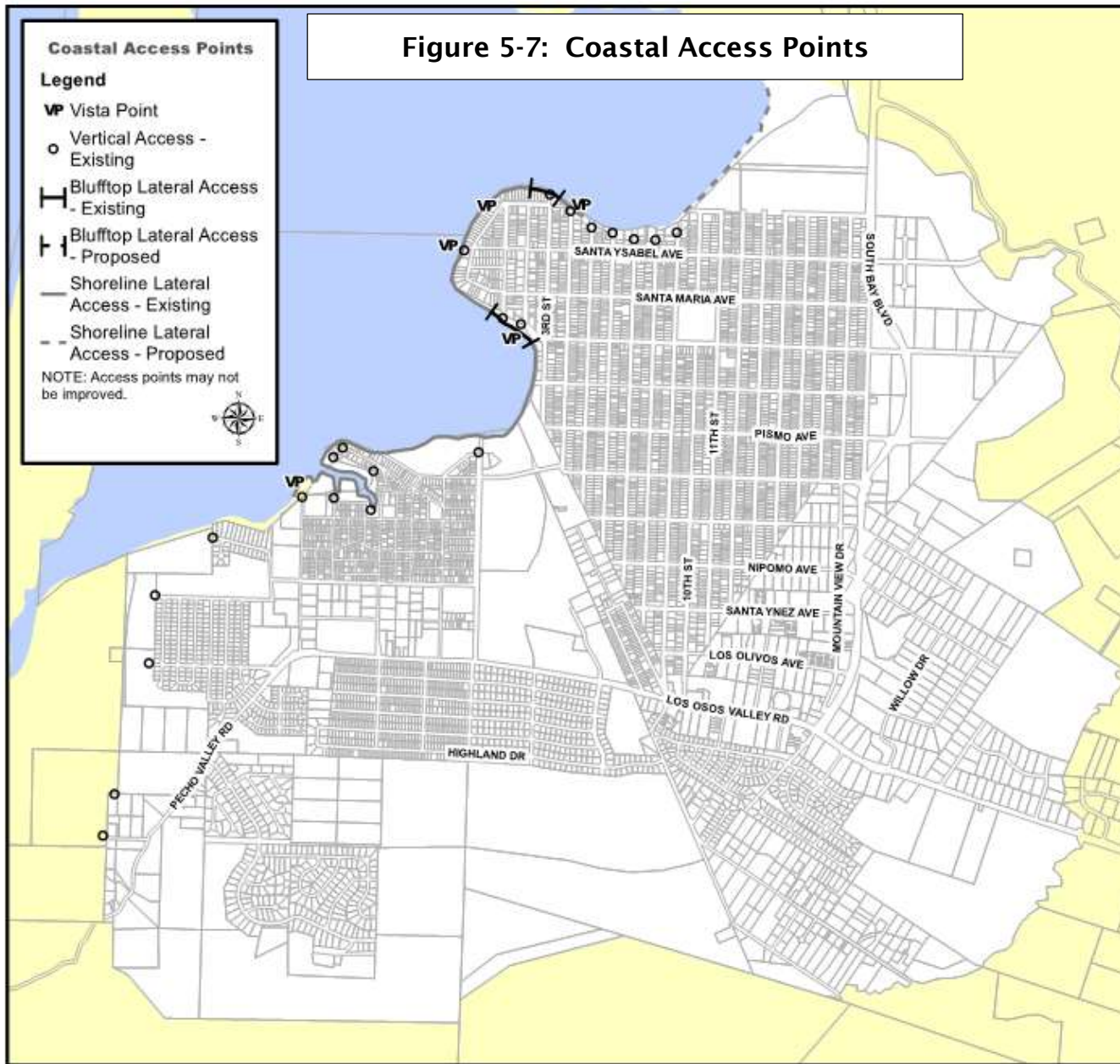
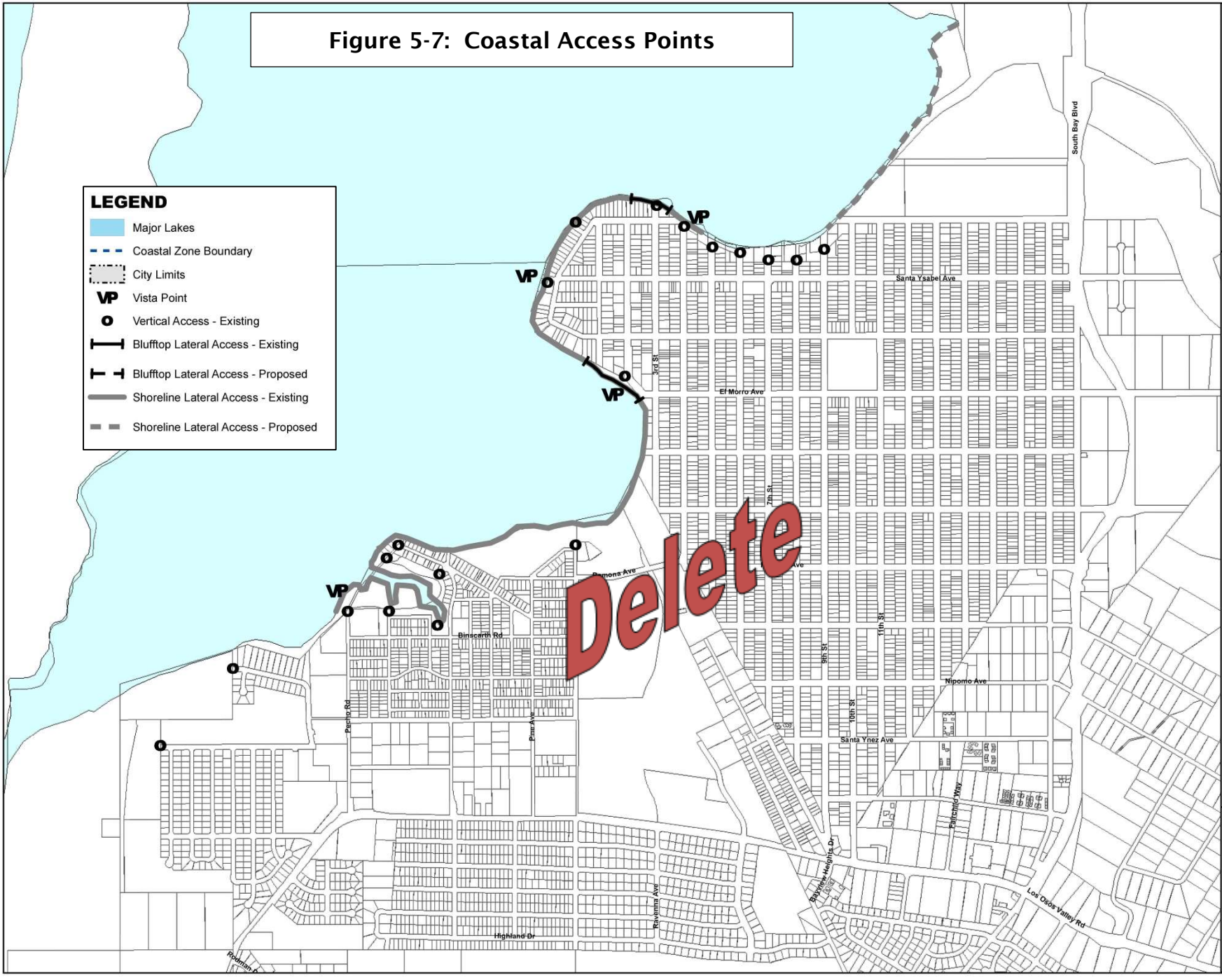


Figure 5-7: Coastal Access Points



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