

# Morro Bay Waterfront Master Plan

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**City of Morro Bay**

Waterfront Master Plan

Community Workshop #2

February 25, 2026



# *Introductions*



# Agenda

- 6:00–6:30 PM Open House Stations
  - » Circulate freely among interactive stations, engage with project materials, and provide input.
- 6:30–7:20 PM Interactive Presentation
  - » Overview of Background Report, including Market Scan and Transportation Report with interactive polling.
- 7:20–8:00 PM Open House Stations
  - » Continue engaging with stations and project team members at your own pace.



# Purpose of Workshop

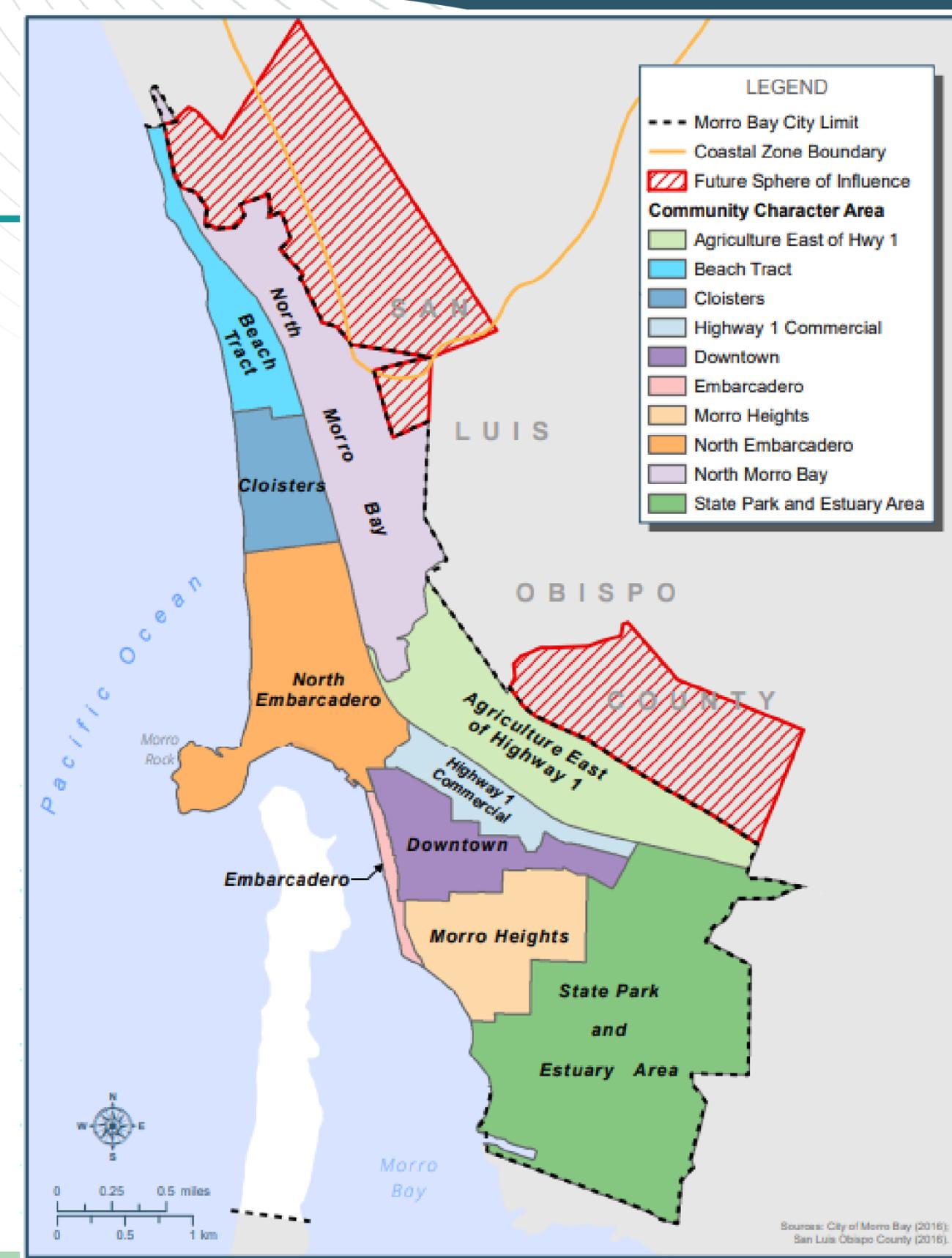
- Share an overview of the project.
- Share a summary of input received from Workshop 1.
- Present and share the Background Report, including Market Scan and Transportation Report.
- Solicit input on a Draft Vision Statement.
- Solicit input on areas of change

# A Successful Workshop

- Everyone is up to speed on where we've been and where we're headed.
- We hear from the community on what's important to include in the Draft Vision Statement.
- We hear from the community about the extent of change to plan for in each of the six character areas.
- Everyone in the room feels heard and respected.
- We remember that we are all one team with a shared goal to create the best possible plan that reflects the community's values and honors our waterfront.

# Poll Questions

- Did you attend Workshop 1?
- Have you attended any WMPAC meetings?
- What neighborhood of Morro Bay do you live in?
- How many years have you lived in Morro Bay?
- How did you hear about tonight's workshop?

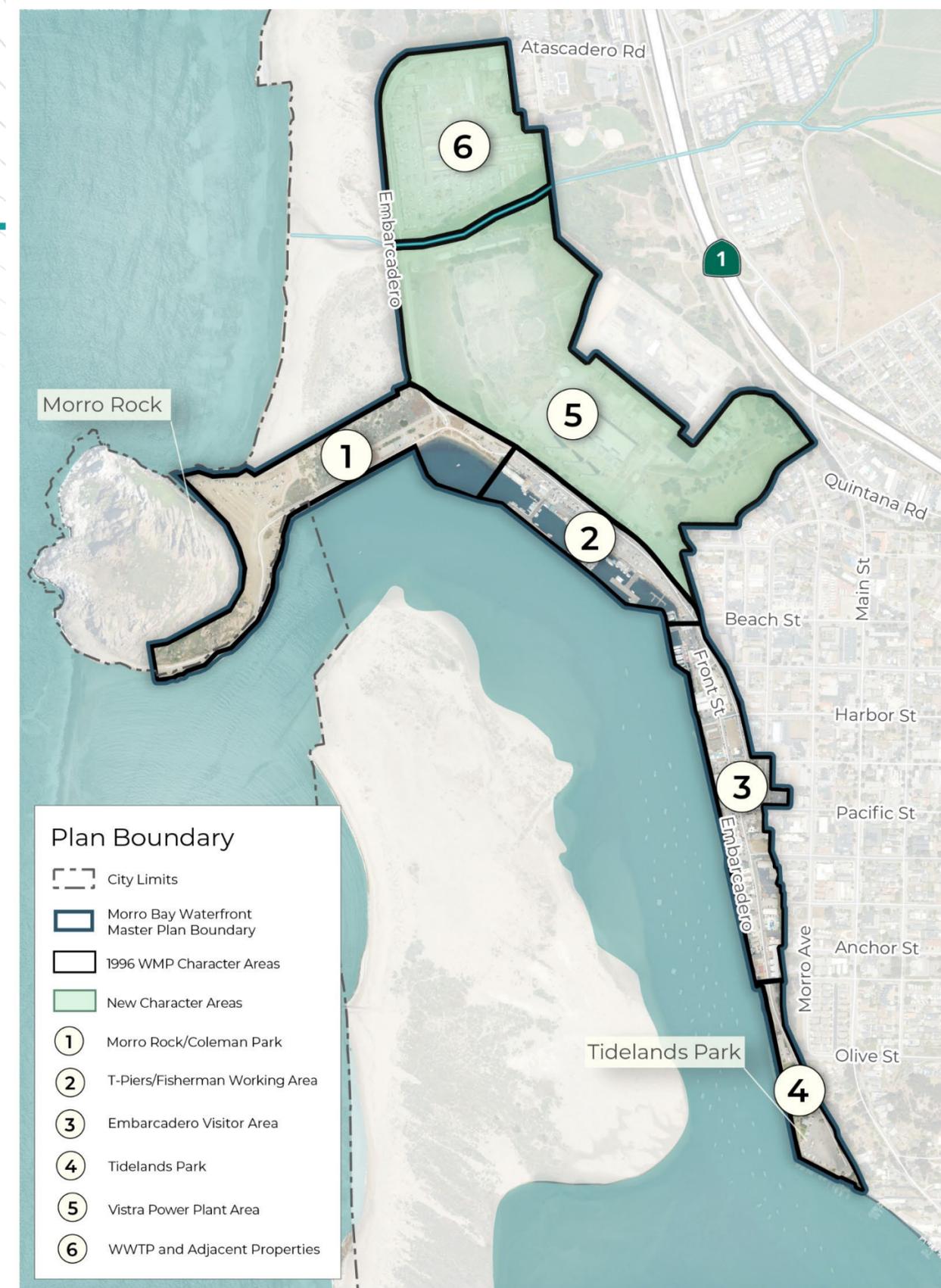


# *Project Overview*



# The Waterfront Master Plan is...

- Maintaining and enhancing our waterfront character and charm.
- Honoring our past while meeting the needs of our future.
- Greater accessibility for locals and visitors to enjoy our spectacular coastal resources.
- Enhanced revenue to provide City services and maintain public amenities.
- Environmental stewardship.



# Where have we been?

- Hired Consultant, PlaceWorks
- Formed the Waterfront Master Plan Advisory Committee (WMPAC)
- Held nine (9) monthly WMPAC meetings
- Conducted a trolley and walking tour of the waterfront
- Prepared a Public Engagement Plan
- Interviewed 25 stakeholders, representing harbor, business, community, and environmental groups
- Finalized the updated waterfront planning area boundaries
- Prepared a Background Report
- Organized, promoted, and conducted Community Workshop #1
- Organized and promoted tonight's workshop



# Where we are going?



# *Background Report*



# Background Report Contents

1. Introduction
2. Existing Uses & Regulations
3. Coastal Regulations
4. Ownership, Leases, & Other Local Regulations
5. Current Waterfront Initiatives
6. Transportation Report
7. Market Scan
8. Public Engagement
9. Evaluation of 1996 WMP Proposals by Plan Area

Appendix A: Market Scan

Appendix B: Transportation Report

# Background Report Overview

- Provides an overview of existing conditions, background information, and policies that inform the planning process for the Waterfront Master Plan update
- References existing planning documents and technical studies, including studies prepared by the City and other entities

# Existing Uses and Regulations

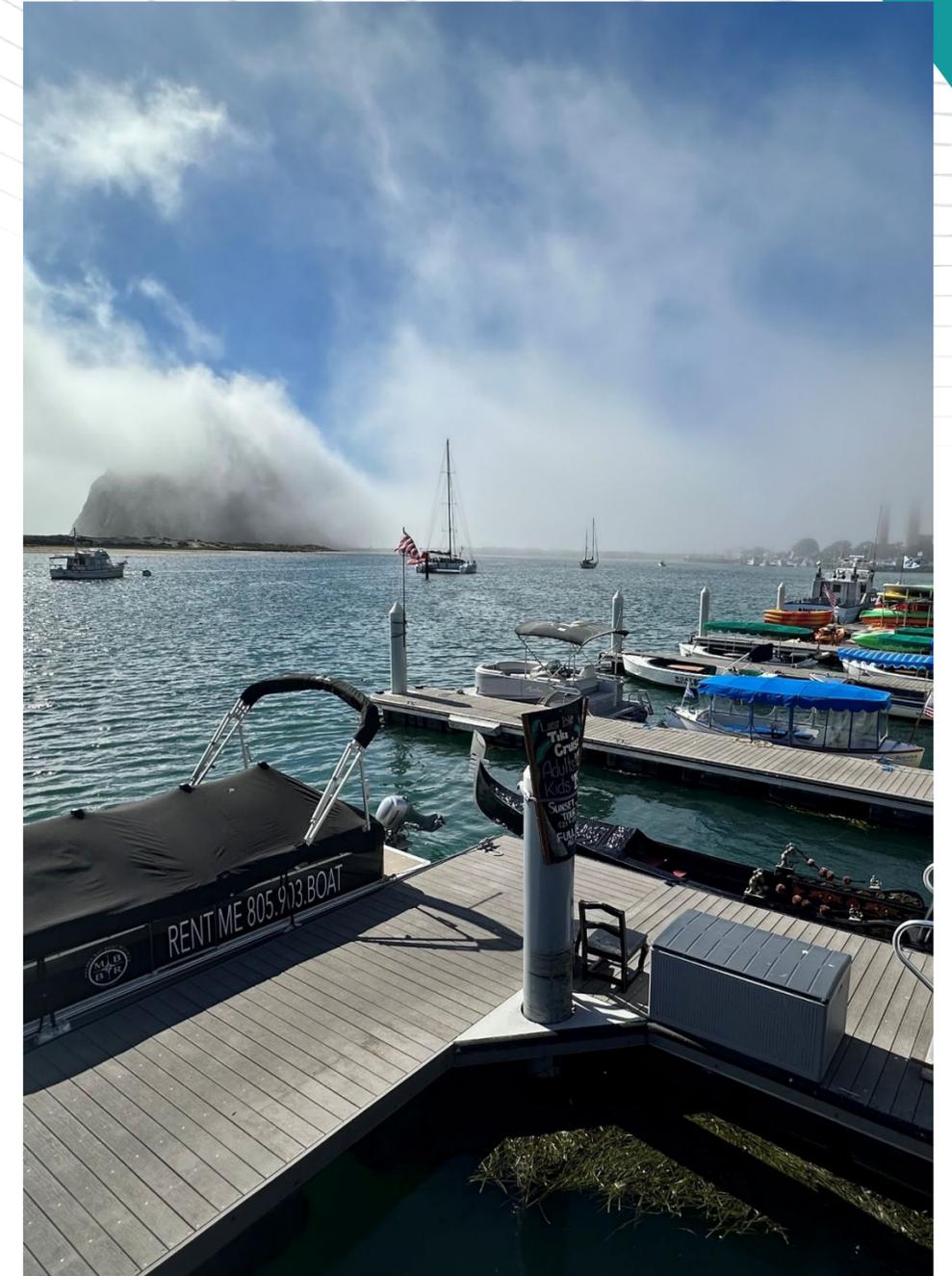
- 2.1 Existing Land Uses
  - » The waterfront land uses include Open Space Area/ Conservation Area and Community Park/Regional Park/ Golf Course (two largest), Major Public Facility, and Downtown/Village.
- 2.2 Plan Morro Bay
  - » The WMP addresses key General Plan (2021) policies: update the 1996 WMP, create a Power Plant site master plan, and plan for the WWTP site redevelopment.
- 2.4 Zoning
  - » Zoning districts include Park and Recreation, Visitor-Serving Commercial, Public Facility, Waterfront, and Commercial Fishing.



# Coastal Regulations

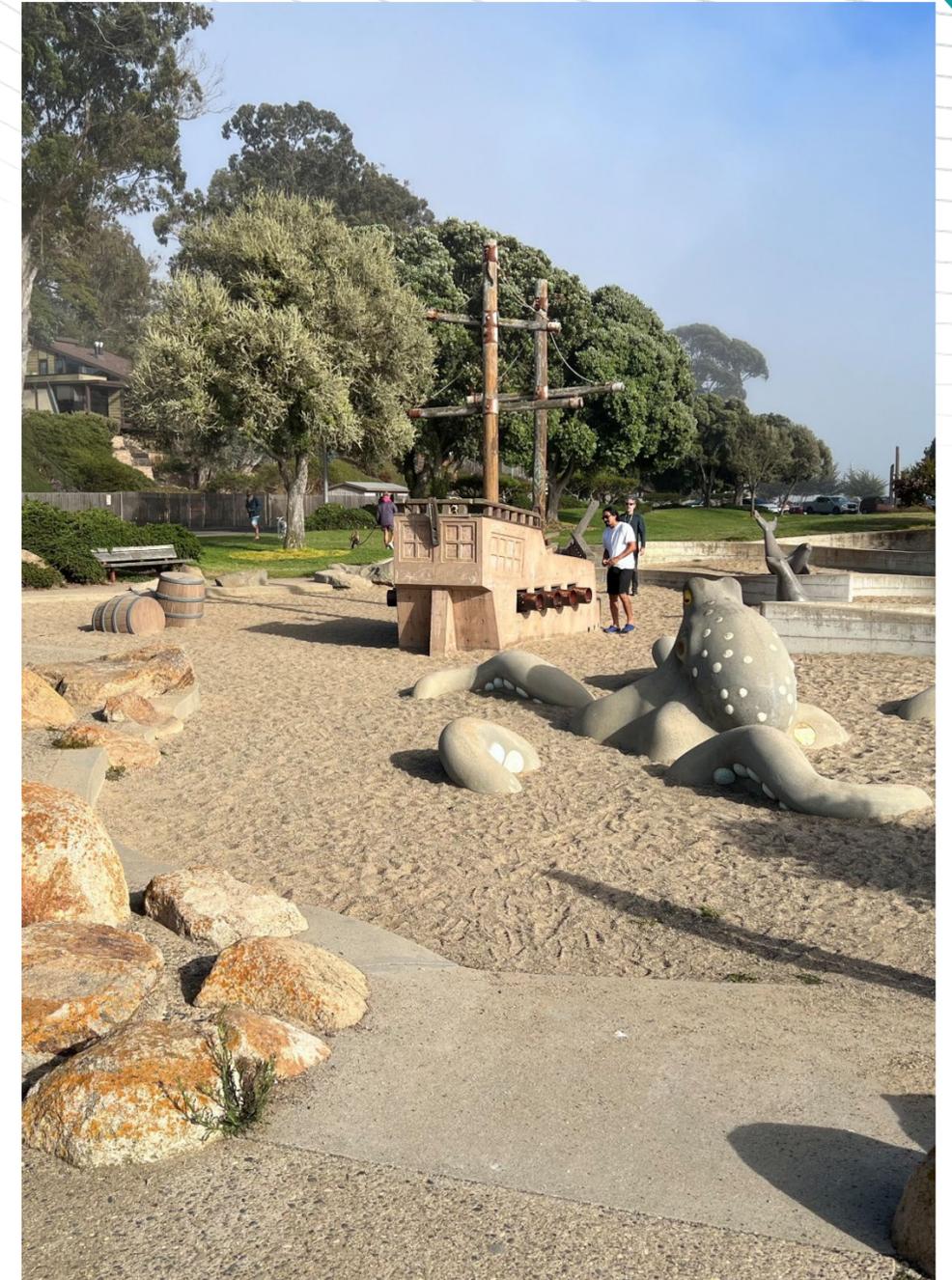
- California Coastal Act & Local Coastal Program
  - » The WMP area falls within the Coastal Zone, regulated by the Coastal Act to preserve resources and ensure public access. The City's LCP was updated and recertified in 2021.
- Sea Level Rise Guidance \*
  - » The WMP will include sea level rise analysis and adaptation pathways per the California Coastal Commission's 2024 guidance.
- Tidelands Trust Agreement
  - » The City manages State-Granted Tidelands under a trust agreement. Revenues must be reinvested into trust purposes.

**\* This is the focus of next week's WMPAC meeting  
(Thursday, March 5)**



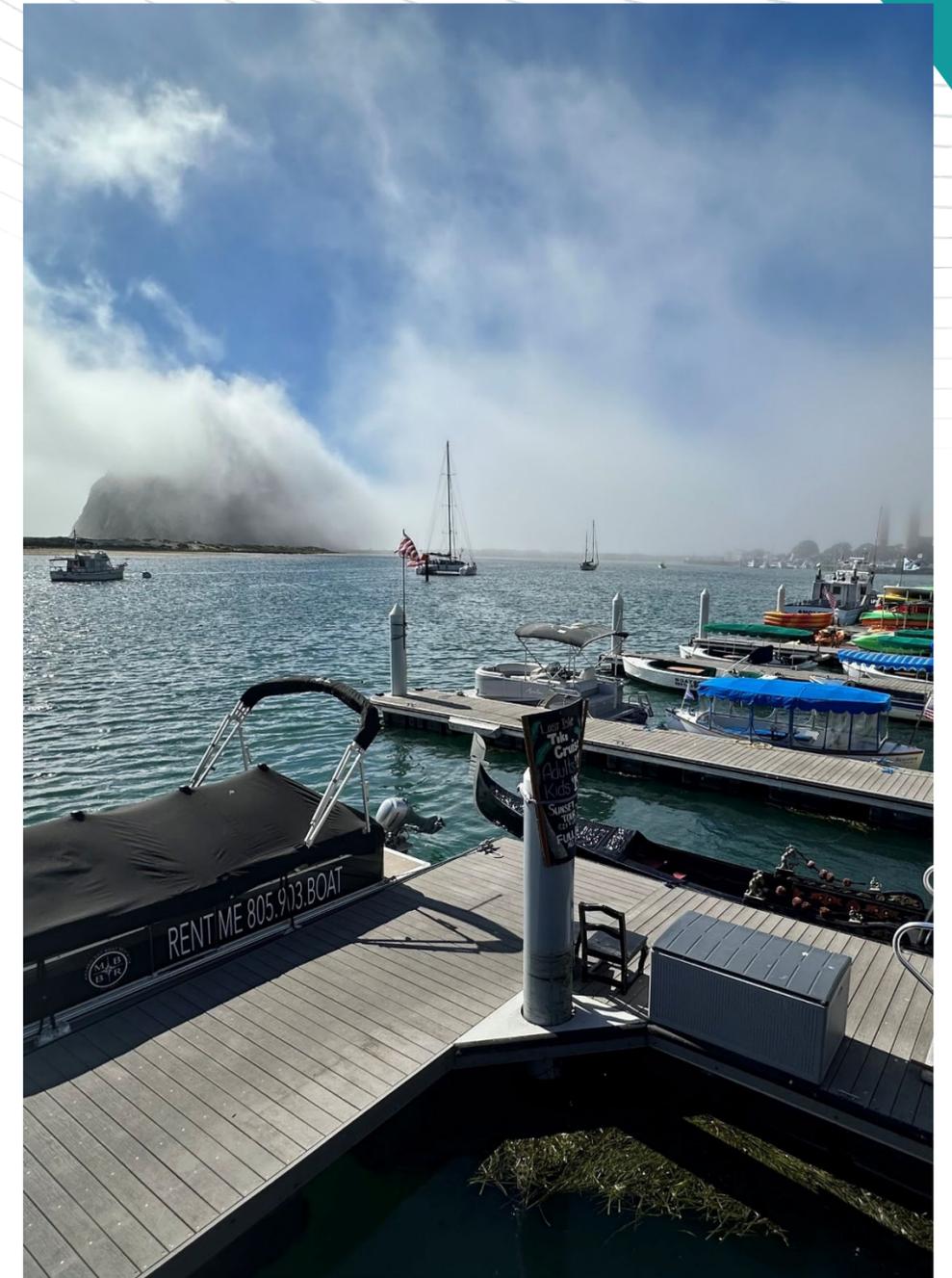
# Local Measures

- Measure D
  - » Measure D prioritizes commercial fishing activities and noncommercial recreational fishing land uses in the half-mile stretch on State tidelands between Beach Street and Target Rock, the main stretch of the Embarcadero.
- Measure A-24
  - » Requires voter approval to change the General Plan land use designations for certain Visitor Serving Commercial and Commercial Fishing areas north of Beach Street.



# Poll Question

- Where do you see opportunities for future development to support the commercial fishing industry and fishing-related tourism experience? (Select one)
  1. Growing commercial fishing
  2. Maintaining current level of commercial fishing
  3. Growing recreational fishing
  4. Growing commercial and recreational fishing
  5. Growing visitor experiences related to commercial fishing



# Leases and Ownership

- Leases
  - » The Harbor Department manages 35 leases on the west side of the Embarcadero.
- Land Ownership
  - » Most parcels on the east side of the Embarcadero are privately owned.
  - » City owns several parcels on the east side of the Embarcadero.
  - » A few parcels west of the Embarcadero are privately owned: Vistra intake building and portions of Giovanni's and Stax.



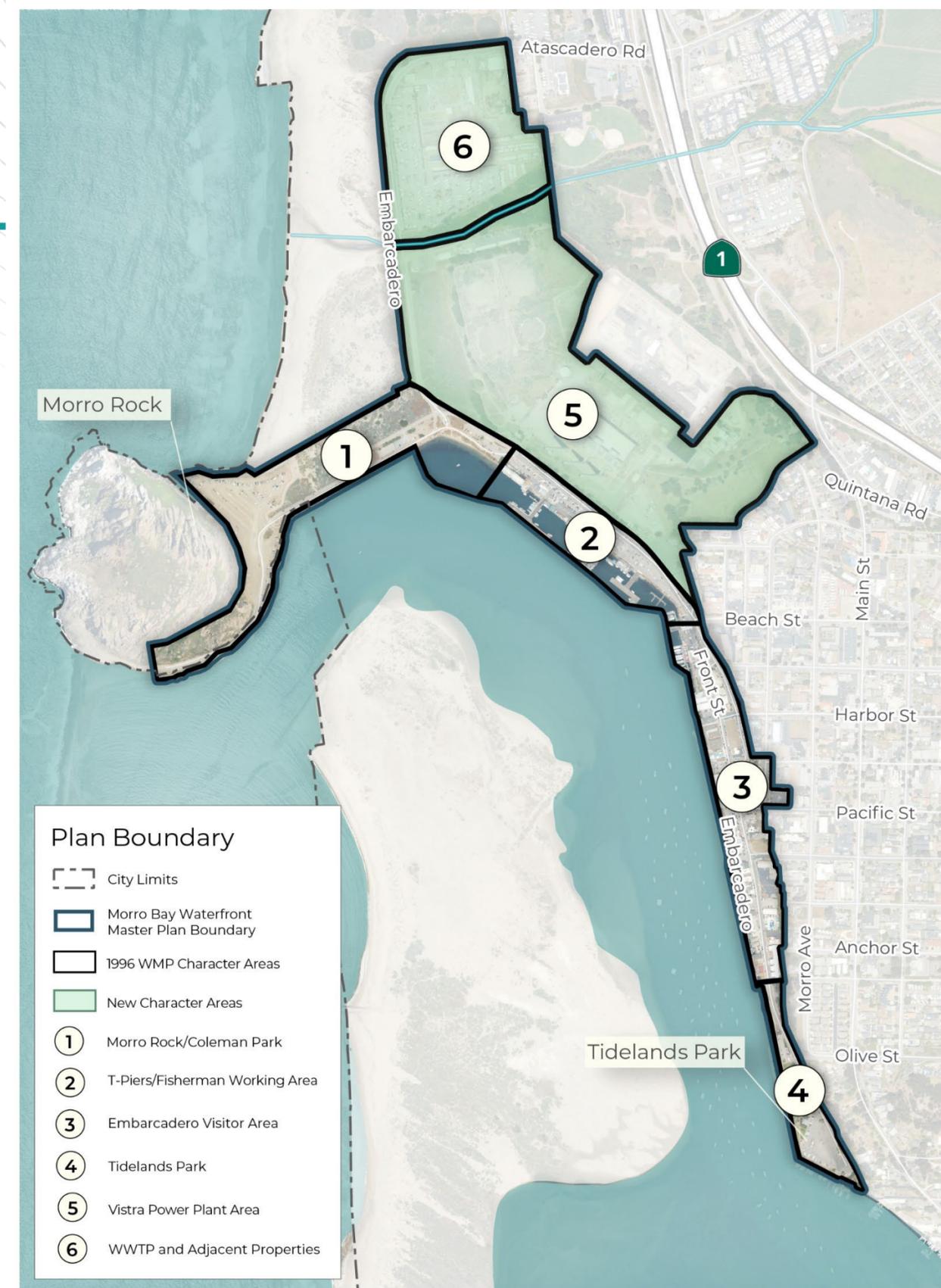
# Other City Planning Policies

- 1996 Waterfront Master Plan
  - » Proposed improvements including parking reorganization, pedestrian amenities, and boat launch facilities.
  - » Contains design guidelines with viewshed protection standards.
- Downtown Waterfront Strategic Plan (2018)
  - » Focuses on connecting downtown to the waterfront through improved walkability, wayfinding, and streetscape improvements.
- Economic Development Strategic Plan (2017)
  - » Created roadmap for diversifying Morro Bay's economy over next 5 years.
  - » Provides implementation recommendations on the key initiatives, including:
    1. Maintaining and enhancing Morro Bay's small town character
    2. Creating vibrant economic centers
    3. Identifying and building upon market opportunity and catalyst sites



# Pop Quiz!

What percent of the WMP area is owned by public agencies?



**Answer:**

58 percent!



# Current Waterfront Initiatives

- The City is actively managing multiple initiatives that will inform the WMP update, including:
  - » Coleman Park Conceptual Plan Market Plaza Redevelopment
  - » Morro Dunes RV Park Lease
  - » Wastewater Treatment Plant Decommissioning
  - » 180 Atascadero Road Concrete Plant Decommissioning
  - » Bayside Landing Development
  - » Maritime Museum Expansion



# Public Engagement

- Stakeholder Focus Groups:
  - » Four focus group discussions engaged Environmental Groups, Business Community, Community Groups, and Harbor-related stakeholders to gather on-the-ground knowledge.
  - » Key Themes from Focus Groups:
    - Discussions covered environmental protection, economic development, circulation and parking concerns, community access, harbor operations, and balancing competing waterfront uses.
- Stakeholder Interviews:
  - » Additional one-on-one interviews provided deeper insights from key stakeholders including leaseholders, fishing industry representatives, and business owners.



# Evaluation of 1996 WMP Proposals

- WMPAC reviewed the status of specific proposals in the 1996 plan at its November 2025 meeting. Public comments were also received at that meeting as well as at the public workshop later in the month. The WMPAC provided additional input on a Draft Consensus Statement and the status table at their January meeting. Based on that input, the table in Section 9.1 shows the status of specific proposals in the 1996 plan. Those that are not marked completed or no longer relevant will be considered going forward for the Waterfront Master Plan Update
- Some of the proposals that have been completed or are considered no longer relevant include:
  - » Work on the parking area at the end of Coleman Dr. at Morro Rock
  - » New boat launch area with paved ramp
  - » PG&E education center
  - » Providing supplemental boat launch facilities at Tidelands Park
  - » Encouraging existing commercial/retail or visitor serving uses to relocate to the second story to accommodate fishing industry and harbor support facilities at ground floor

# *Appendix A: Market Scan*



# Purpose of Market Scan

- The market scan will support the Waterfront Master Plan process by informing a vision for future uses on the waterfront that leverage the strengths of Morro Bay's character and economy while aligning with the city's economic development policies and goals.
- Additional economic analysis will occur as part of Visioning and will also include demand analysis to inform development of potential alternatives and policies for the Draft Waterfront Master Plan



# Waterfront Success & Future Economic Growth

## ● Strengths:

- » Established visitor economy that can continue to drive economic growth.
- » Array of existing recreational and other assets.
- » Prime location in the Central Coast Region.
- » Strategic redevelopment sites along or nearby the waterfront.
- » Proximity to a younger visitor base and talent pool.

## ● Challenges:

- » Less developed as a visitor “destination” brand.
- » Limited capacity of overnight visitor amenities.
- » Rising construction and development costs.
- » Existing regulatory and land use constraints along the waterfront.
- » Fragmented leases and ownership make it difficult to curate future development.

*Appendix B:  
Transportation  
Report*



# Transportation Background Report

- Traffic volumes

- ~6,000 vehicles enter and exit the plan area on weekdays
- Higher on weekends
- Some congestion during peak periods

2025 Waterfront Master Plan Counts				
Road	Data Collection Location	Weekday ADT	Weekend ADT	
Embarcadero Rd	North of Beach St	6,900	10,800	
Embarcadero Rd	North of Pacific St	2,800	5,500	
Embarcadero Rd	South of Marina St	3,200	5,100	
Atascadero Rd	West of Highway 1 Southbound Ramps	3,500	3,600	
Beach St	East of Embarcadero Rd	7,000	6,600	
Harbor St	West of Market Ave	2,000	3,000	
Pacific St	East of Embarcadero Rd	1,800	2,500	
Marina St	East of Embarcadero Rd	1,700	2,300	

ADT = Average Daily Traffic.



# Transportation Background Report

## ● Parking

- Fully occupied during busiest periods
- Spaces are available within 2-3 blocks

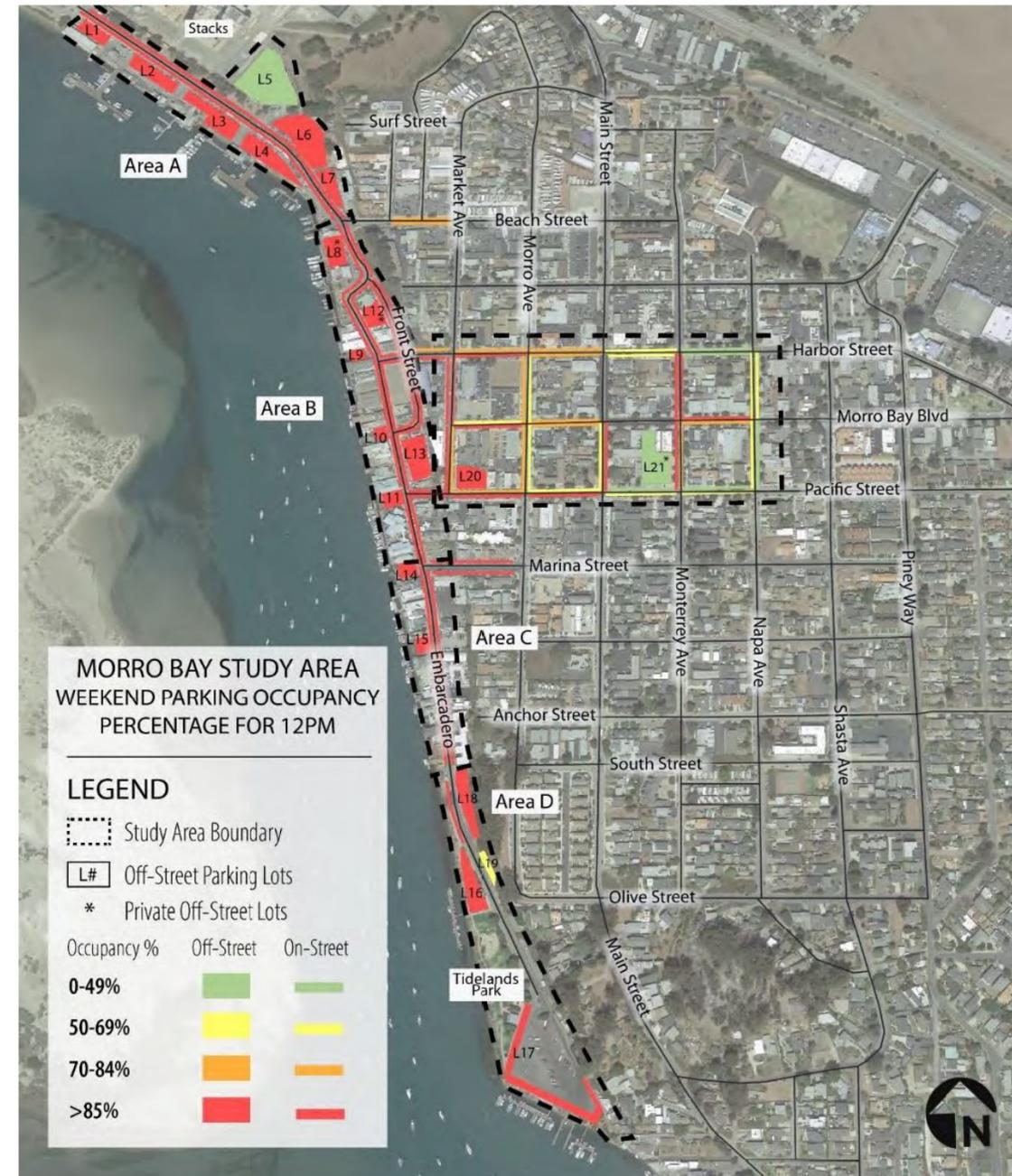
## ● Bicycle/pedestrian access

- Morro Creek Bridge is heavily used
- Harborwalk has key discontinuities
- Embarcadero sidewalks often crowded

## ● Safety

- 72 crashes in plan area (2015-2024)
- Priorities include lower speeds, reducing cut-through traffic, & improving lighting

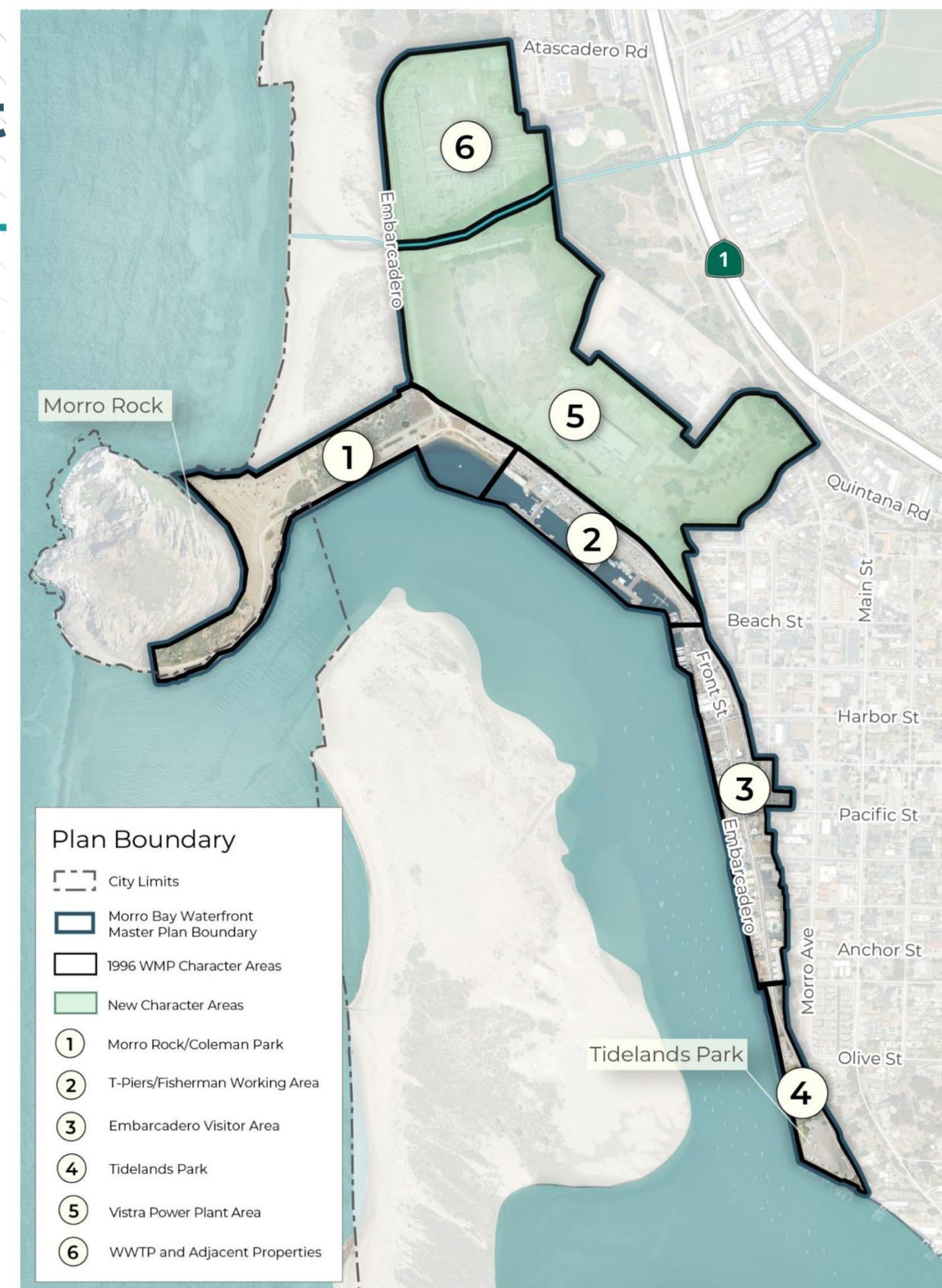
ES-Figure 2: Summer Weekend Peak Parking Demand - Noon



Source: Aerial Image – Google Earth Professional, 2020, Graphic – Walker Consultants, 2020

# Major Revisions in Final Background Report

- Property ownership map added and land ownership narrative clarified.
- Narrative about history of land ownership and leases added.
- Detailed history statement added.
- Maps and figures updated for improved readability.
- Facts researched and corrected.



# *Draft Vision Statement*



# Draft Statements Supporting Vision

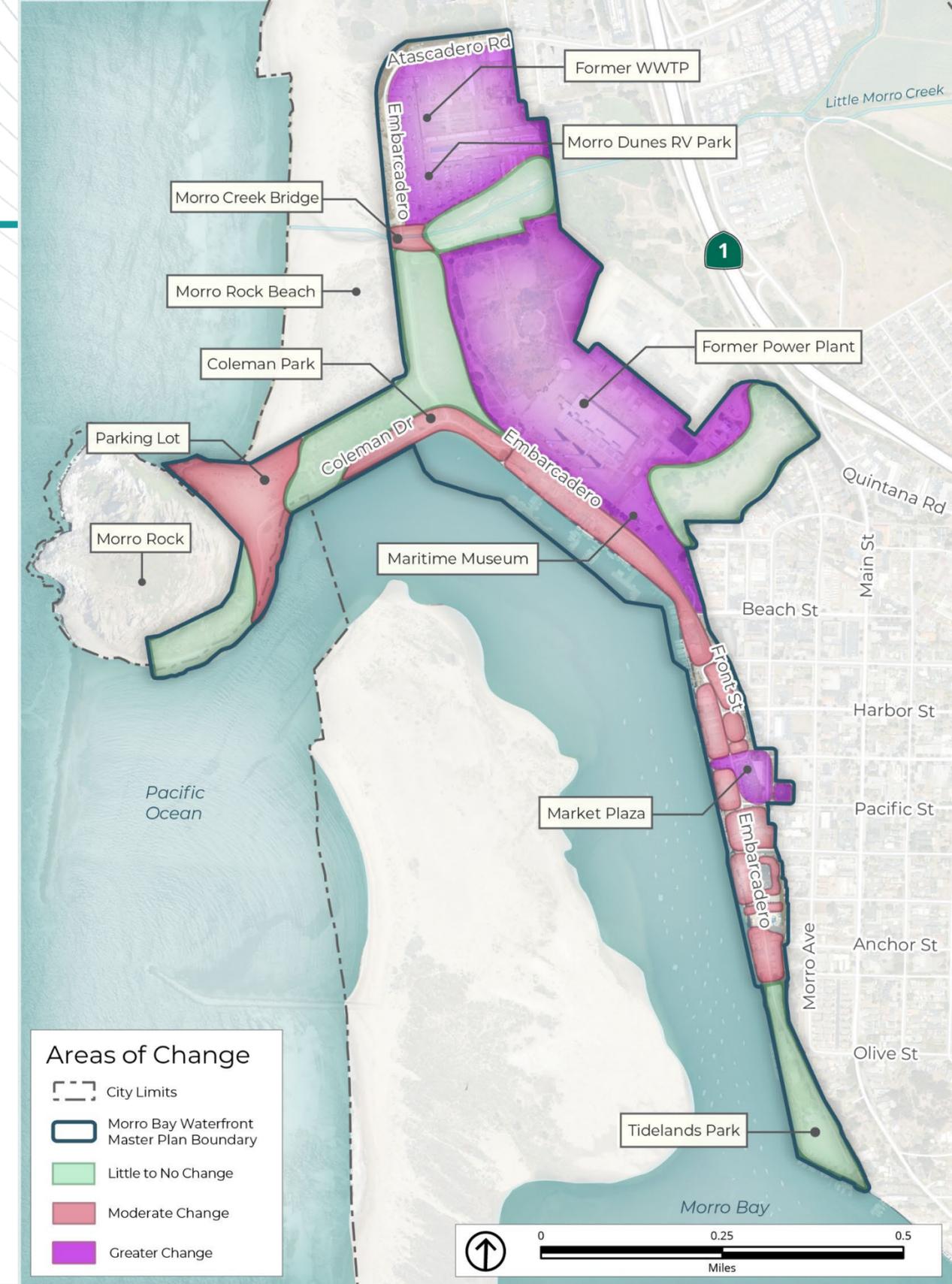
- In 25 years, the Waterfront will be:
  - » A vibrant **economic district**, supporting water-based tourism, hospitality, and local businesses.
  - » A place that preserves, enhances, and celebrates its **nature and wildlife amenities**.
  - » A **working harbor** where the infrastructure is **resilient** and sustainable in face of sea level rise.
  - » A district convenient and **accessible** to visit by motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and boaters alike.
  - » The port of call for a **vibrant commercial and recreational fishing industry**.
  - » A destination serving locals and visitors that maintains Morro Bay's unique fishing village charm.
  - » A **destination for people of all ages** to be entertained, educated and rejuvenated.

# *Areas of Change Map*



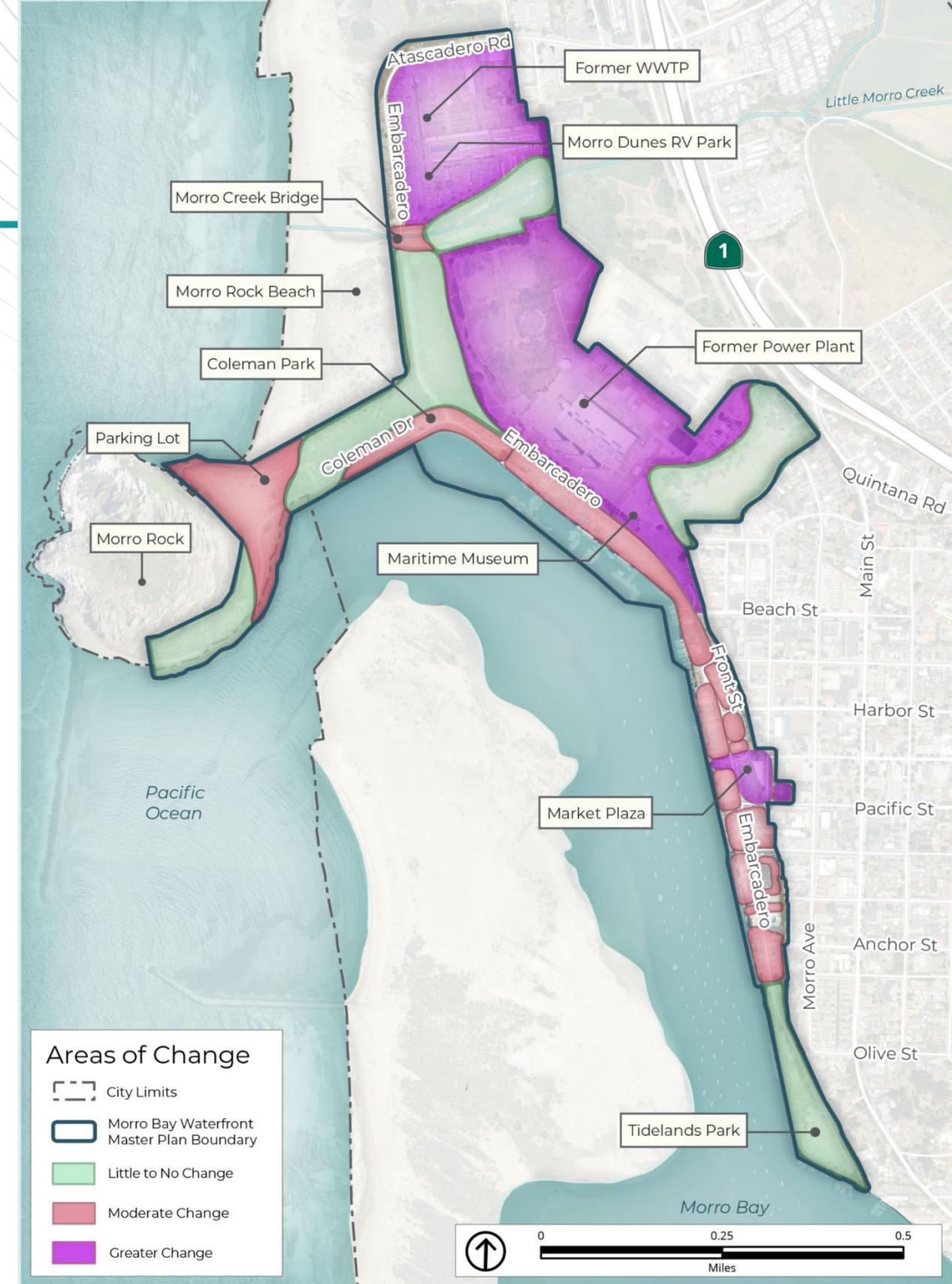
# Areas of Change Map

- The areas of change map provides an initial framework for concept alternatives
- The areas of change are categorized into three categories:
  - » **Little To No Change:** Open Space and Natural Areas (Tidelands Park, Morro Rock, Morro Creek,
  - » **Moderate Change:** Properties held as public leases, areas/proposals carried forward from the 1996 WMP SP
  - » **Greater Change:** Areas that address General Plan Policies LU 5.4 and LU 5.5 (Power Plant Area and WWTP Area) and areas identified in the Downtown Waterfront Strategic Plan (Market Plaza, Triangle Lot at Surf St)



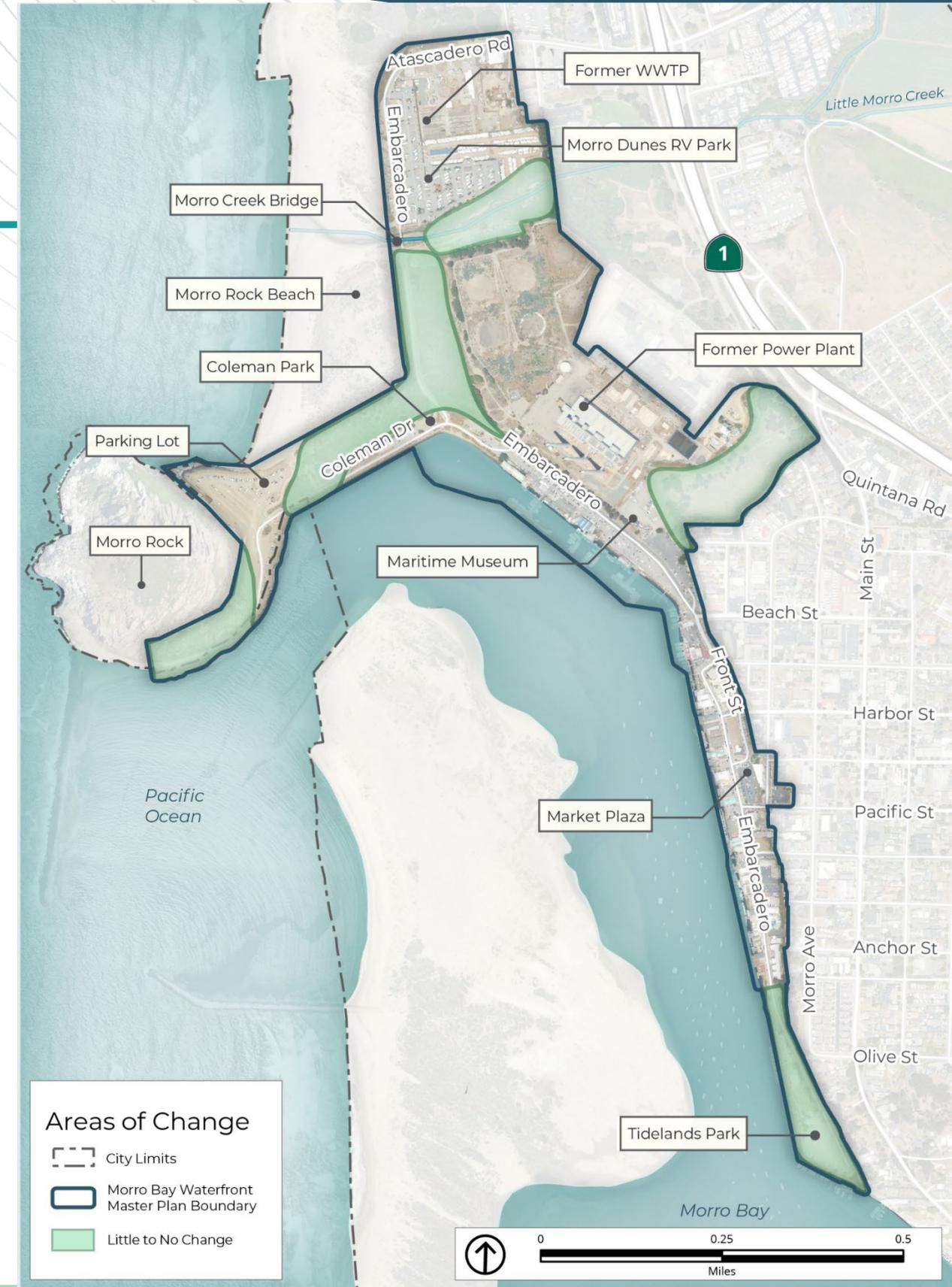
# Areas of Change Map

- Do you agree with the Area of Change Map?



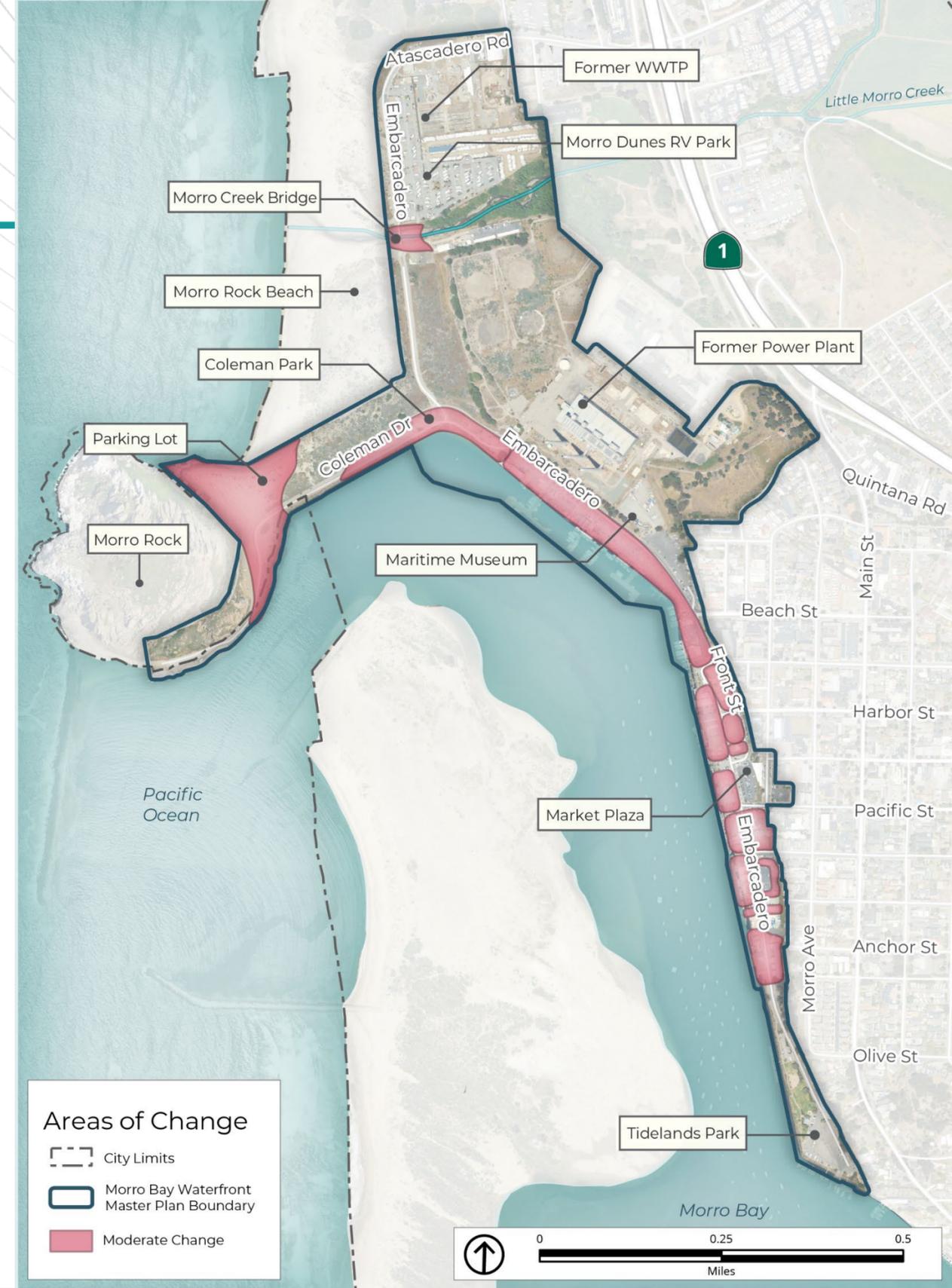
# Areas of Little Change Map

- Do you agree with the areas of **little** change?
- Open Space and Natural Areas (Tidelands Park, Morro Rock, Morro Creek)



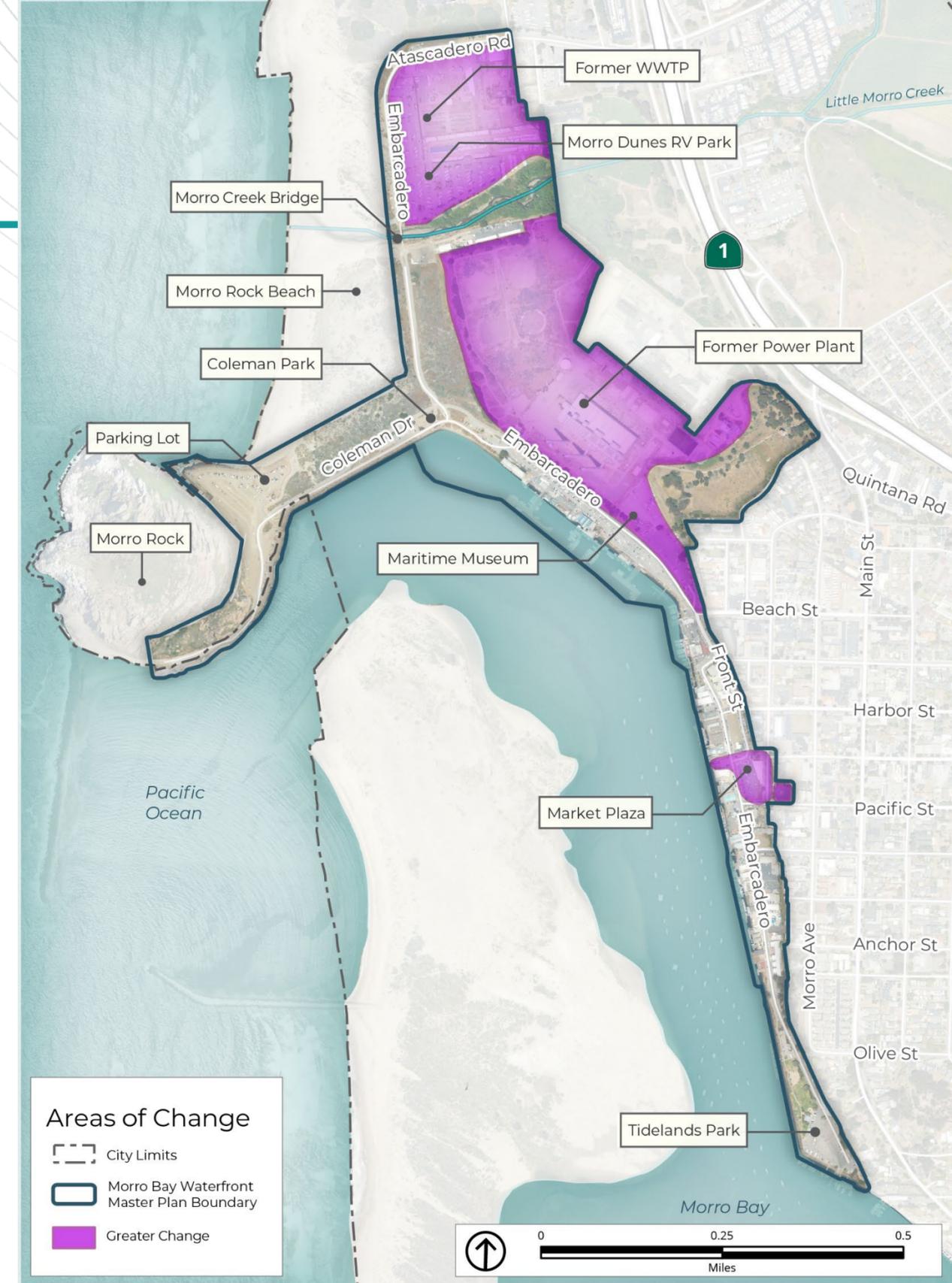
# Areas of Moderate Change Map

- Do you agree with the areas of moderate change?
- Properties held as public leases, areas/proposals carried forward from the 1996 WMP SP



# Areas of Greater Change Map

- Do you agree with the areas of greater change?
- Areas that address General Plan Policies LU 5.4 and LU 5.5 (Power Plant Area and WWTP Area) and areas identified in the Downtown Waterfront Strategic Plan (Market Plaza, Triangle Lot at Surf St)



# *Q&A / Final Comments*



# Thank You

