

Chapter 2: THE CIRCULATION PLAN

The circulation plan focuses on vehicular and bicycle circulation in the downtown, as well as community-wide alternative travel routes and connectivity. This chapter begins with a discussion of existing conditions and issues, followed by the recommended changes for Highway 1 travel lanes, turning movements and consolidation of driveways. Road extensions are explained in section D, and transit is described in section E.

A. Existing Conditions

This section discusses the circulation issues pertaining to vehicular and pedestrian safety factors, multiple driveways and turning movements, potential shared access, cross-street connections, commercial vehicle access, and bicycle access.

1. Inventory of Existing Circulation

a. Highways

State Route 1 (Highway 1) is a two-lane north-south State highway that provides regional access between Sonoma, Mendocino, and Humboldt Counties on the Pacific Coast. Highway 1 which is the only north-south arterial that serves Gualala operates as the community's main street. The posted speed limit on Highway 1 in the study area is 25 miles per hour (mph). Actual speeds exceed 25 mph when conditions permit. Highway 1 contains two travel lanes that vary in width from approximately 11 to 12 ft. Variable shoulders that range up to 12 ft are provided through the community. According to Caltrans 2007 Traffic Counts on the California State Highway System, Highway 1 in Gualala between the Gualala River Bridge and the north limits of Gualala has an annual average daily traffic volume of approximately 4,300 vehicles.

b. Connector Streets

Old State Highway is a two-lane local connector that provides access to rural residences located in the hills of the Coast Range east of Highway 1 above town. Old State Highway has a posted speed limit of 35 to 40 mph, travel lanes that are approximately 12 ft wide, variable shoulders that are generally less than 2 ft, and occasional turnouts. Old State Highway is striped with a double yellow centerline and white edge lines. No bicycle, pedestrian, or transit facilities are provided along this rural roadway. Based on machine counts taken for a traffic study in November of 2005, Old State Highway carries approximately 870 vehicles per day south of Moonrise Drive, and experiences two-way peak hour volumes of fewer than 100 vehicles per hour.

c. Local Roads

Center Street is a private two-lane local road approximately 30 ft in width that provides access to the Gualala Community Center and various business and properties east of Highway 1 in southern Gualala.

- Church Street is a two-lane local road approximately 30 ft in width that travels north south on the east side of Highway 1 between Moonrise Drive and Ocean Drive.

- Cypress Way is a two-lane local road approximately 30 ft in width on the east side of Highway 1 that extends north from Ocean Drive to various business and residential properties.
- Moonrise Drive is a private two-lane local road approximately 30 ft in width that provides access to Church Street and properties east of Highway 1 central Gualala.
- Ocean Drive is a two-lane local road approximately 30 ft in width that provides access to commercial and public facilities on the east side of Highway 1 and residential properties on the west side of Highway 1.
- Sundstrom Street is a two-lane private drive that extends from Highway 1 into the Sundstrom Mall. Sundstrom Street varies in width from approximately 30 to 64 ft.

d. Intersections

There are numerous uncontrolled driveway intersections along Highway 1 between Old State Highway and Ocean Drive that impact vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian operations. The primary congestion point in the community is on Highway 1 at the driveways with Sundstrom Mall and the Surf Market. While operation at these driveways was evaluated, Caltrans standards of significance were not applied since the delay is related to private access points and not public streets.

- Highway 1/Old State Highway is a tee intersection with a stop control on the Old State Highway approach to Highway 1.
- Highway 1/Center Street is a “tee” intersection with a stop control on the Center Street approach to Highway 1.
- Highway 1/Ocean Drive is a four-way intersection with stop controls on the Ocean Drive approaches to Highway 1.

e. Pedestrian Activity

Pedestrian activity is present along each roadway throughout the community of Gualala, with heavier use focused along Highway 1 in the downtown corridor, especially in the vicinity of the post office and market driveways. Despite a lack of pedestrian facilities and, in many locations, the availability of little or no space to walk outside of the vehicle travel lanes, residents and tourists can be found walking along roadway shoulders and/or in the roadway along all streets in the study area, including Highway 1. Well-worn informal pedestrian pathways exist along Highway 1 where no roadway shoulders exist, demonstrating a need for pedestrian facilities.

f. Crosswalks

There is one marked crosswalk in the study area. A ladder-striped crosswalk is provided across Highway 1 between the Surf Market and the Sundstrom Mall. The pedestrian crossing distance at the crosswalk is approximately 52 ft.

Standard yellow advanced pedestrian warning and crosswalk warning signs are provided for the crosswalk.

g. Curb, Gutter and Sidewalks

Curb, gutter and sidewalk facilities are provided in only limited locations throughout the study area. Short stretches of intermittent curb, gutter, and sidewalk exist along the east side of Highway 1 along the frontage of the Sundstrom Mall property. Existing sidewalk segments, which are short and disconnected, range from approximately 4 to 8 ft wide.

h. Curb and Pedestrian Ramps

In general, ADA curb ramps are not provided in the study area.

i. Driveway Aprons

Due to the absence of curb, gutter, and sidewalks, driveway aprons are generally absent from driveway locations in Gualala. Instead, at driveway access points, the pavement widens to large paved and/or gravel apron areas.

j. Bicycle Facilities

There are no formal bicycle facilities in the study area including on-street, off-street and/or bicycle support facilities such as bicycle parking. However, Highway 1 is part of the Pacific Coast Bike Route and it experiences regular recreational use along with a seasonal influx of bicycle tourists during the summer months.

k. Transit Facilities

The Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) Bus provides public transit in Gualala. Daily AM and PM service is provided to outlying communities and intermodal transit stations. Route 95 provides service between Point Arena and Santa Rosa, and Route 75 provides service between Gualala, Ukiah, and Fort Bragg. MTA currently stops off of Highway 1 in Gualala at the Sundstrom Mall. All MTA buses are wheelchair accessible. Two bikes may be carried on Mendocino Transit Authority intercity buses. Rack space is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

l. Streetlights

There are no known streetlights in Gualala. However, several developments adjacent to Highway 1 provide some illumination of the commercial district.

2. Local Circulation Issues

Highway 1 is the primary transportation route in Gualala. It extends north-south along the coast and accommodates trips ranging from local to interregional. Old State Highway, Center Street, and Ocean Drive are County roads, and Sundstrom Street and Moonrise Drive are private roads that facilitate local circulation within the study area. In general, the local roadway network consists of several short, low volume roadways that extend east-west and provide access to the various businesses and residences congregated along the Highway 1 corridor. Old State Highway, being the exception, provides access to residences on the "Ridge" east of the study area.

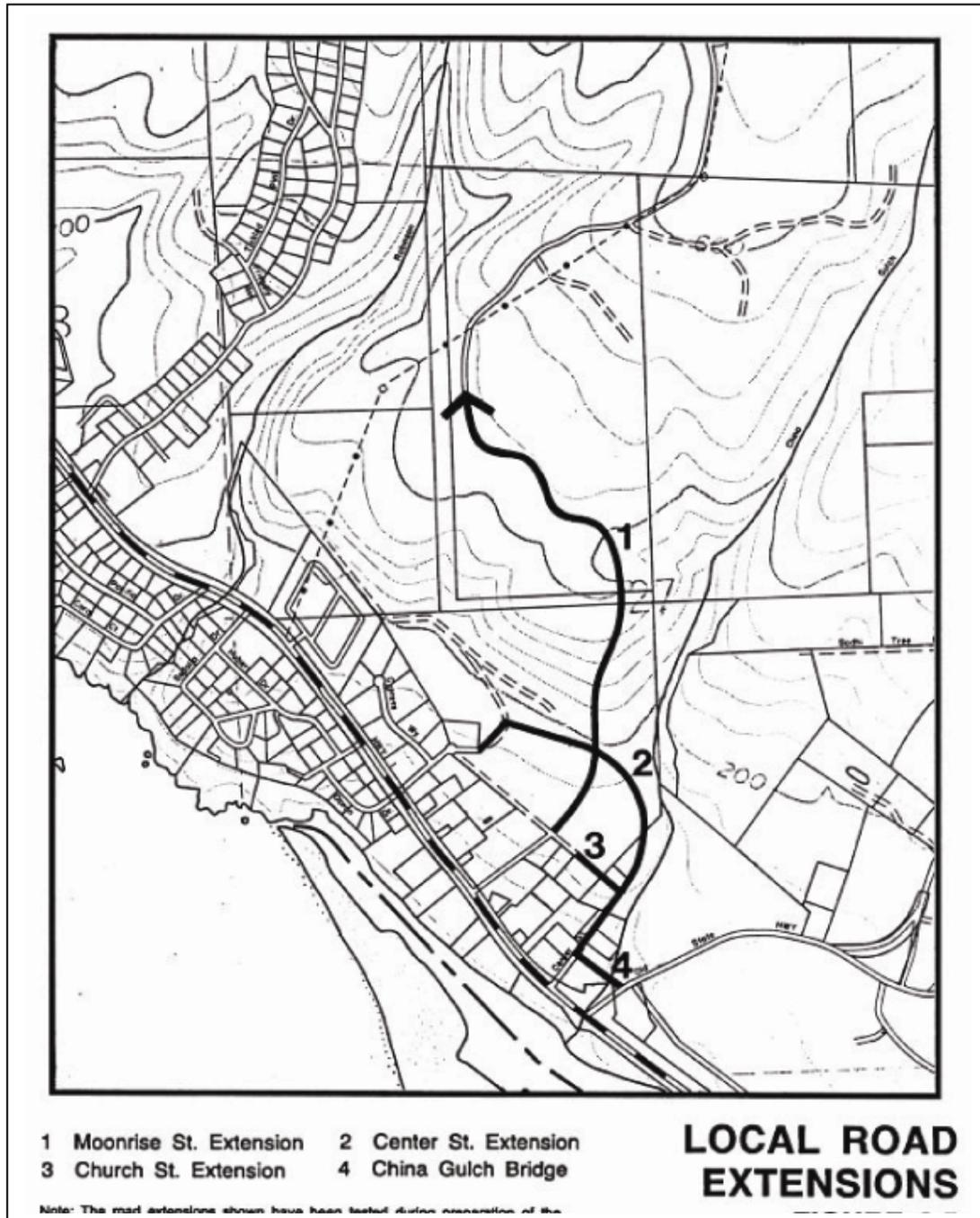


Fig. 2-1 Local Roadway Extension (GTP)

Circulation in Gualala is hampered by limited connectivity of local roadways, both public and private. To address local circulation needs, the Gualala Town Plan indicates that a local road network shall be developed in the districts east of Highway 1 to provide alternatives to travel on the Highway. Four conceptual road extensions were developed in the Plan; they are defined below and shown in Figure 2-1.

1. Moonrise Street extension—connects Ocean Drive, Moonrise, and Center Street to Old State Highway on the ridge
2. Center Street extension—connects to Church Street and Moonrise extension
3. Church Street extension (south)—connects to Center Street
4. China Gulch Bridge—connects Center Street to Old State Highway

The network of proposed extensions was developed to mitigate traffic congestion resulting from anticipated development permitted by the Town Plan. However, the Plan indicates that implementation would occur with new development as the need arises, and that other road network configurations demonstrated to be equally or more effective in mitigating the traffic impacts of new development may be proposed by developers and adopted in lieu of the road extensions listed above.

3. Recommended Roadway Extensions

While major roadway extensions are not proposed as a part of this effort, the following measures are recommended to improve local circulation in the short term.

- Improve Center Street to a 40 foot cross section to meet minimum County standards. Improvements should be designed to accommodate two-way traffic, on-street parking, and include sidewalks to facilitate pedestrian circulation.
- Develop an extension of Center Street behind the Community Center to connect to Jack's Gualala Pharmacy and the greater Sundstrom Mall. This short extension would improve local circulation, establish a connection between the Sundstrom Mall and the Community Center, and provide an opportunity to share parking between the uses.
- To ensure that public access rights are maintained, right-of-way acquisition and/or public easements are recommended for the Center Street extension and the main driveway entrance to the Sundstrom Mall.

Public comment included suggestions to reconfigure circulation within the Sundstrom Mall to allow one-way circulation only. While this suggestion has significant merit, the proposed driveway consolidations, turn lanes, streetscape enhancements along Highway 1 proposed in the Downtown Design Plan will address the issues that led to the development of this suggestion.

4. Driveways, Street Access Points, and Shared Access

Driveway consolidation is a major component of the proposed Streetscape Plan. Presently, curb, gutter, driveway aprons, and sidewalks are generally absent from driveway locations in Gualala. Instead vehicle access and egress from Highway 1 is

provided via paved and/or gravel access points which have little definition and tend to be much larger than necessary. The existing “wide open” driveway configuration leads to constantly changing parking arrangements and circulation patterns within the driveway areas. This dynamic situation results in unpredictable turning movements, creating confusion and conflicts between turning vehicles, through traffic on Highway 1, and pedestrians.



Existing continuous driveway aprons

To address these issues the Streetscape Plan aims to minimize multiple curb cuts in the corridor, upgrade all driveways to conform to minimum Caltrans design standards, provide continuous pedestrian walkways or pathways along both sides of the street, and install ADA curb ramps and pedestrian crossing accommodations at intersections. Moreover, shared driveway access between neighboring parcels has been encouraged to improve operational efficiency, on-site circulation, and to allow for reconfiguration of internal parking plans as a measure to gain additional parking spaces. Driveway consolidations and improvements are proposed at the following locations:

a. Westside of Highway 1

- Close the southern outlet driveway to the Breakers Motel and Bones Restaurant which is located south and off-set from Sundstrom Street.
- Close the southern access driveway to the Surf Supermarket opposite the Sundstrom Mall driveway. It is anticipated that this closure would only occur in conjunction with redevelopment of the site and only if sufficient onsite parking is retained or developed.
- Eliminate the expanse of open pavement in front of the Surf Shopping Center, opposite the 76 Station, as well as the northern driveway which provides access to the back of the building. Note these closures would occur only with redevelopment of the site and are not proposed for implementation until re-development occurs. Since the Caltrans right-of-way is prescriptive here, the owner feels that all on-street parking for the Surf Center must be protected as much as practical.



b. Eastside of Highway 1

- Install ADA curb ramps at Sundstrom Street.

- Consolidate the Gualala Hotel and main Sundstrom Mall driveways. Install ADA curb ramps and driveway apron improvements. To ensure private properties at the site are adequately served, it is recommended that formal easement agreements are developed and/or the driveway be acquired as a public right-of-way.
- Install ADA curb ramps and driveway apron improvements at both entrances to: the 76 Station, and the Chevron Station.
- Install ADA curb ramps at Moonrise Drive.
- Install driveway apron and sidewalks which would eliminate the open pavement condition in front of: the Collectibles Store, Adventure Rents, and Century 21 Realty Office.
 - Pangaea Restaurant.
 - Frank Howard Allen Realtors, Alinder Gallery, and the Florist.
 - Central Valley Cable TV and retail shops.
- Install ADA curb ramps, crosswalks, and intersection improvements at Ocean Drive.
- Install pathway improvements in front of the Cypress Village shopping center.
- Install pathway connector and crosswalk leading from the Cypress Village to the north western Ocean Drive intersection.
- Install crosswalk with refuge island across Highway 1 on the north side of the Gualala Mobile Court driveway.



No walkway at Ocean Drive

All driveway upgrades shall conform to the design guidelines established in Section 205.3 Urban Driveways in the Caltrans Highway Design Manual.

5. Safety Considerations

A variety of safety considerations were identified through the plan process including highway operations, highway access and egress, sight lines, pedestrian circulation and access, bicycle circulation and access, lighting and visibility, and others including community context. The collision history and operation analysis performed for the Phase 1 Community Action Plan guided the recommendations and safety considerations developed for the Gualala CAP II Downtown Design Plan. The proposed Plan includes a combination of turn pockets, medians, and continuous left turn lanes on Highway 1 to facilitate operations, address safety, and maintain acceptable levels of service within the corridor. Continuous sidewalks, Class II bike lanes, and high visibility signs, markings, and treatments have been designed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access and to address safety considerations.

6. Commercial Vehicle Access

Commercial vehicle access is important for Gualala's economic vitality. Commercial vehicles generally access the community via northbound Highway 1. It is understood that loading and unloading typically occurs on private property, with occasional access occurring directly from Highway 1. The need to provide staging and turn-around access for large commercial vehicles was identified and the overlook across from the community center has been configured to continue to accommodate this use. Other long recreation vehicles may need to park on side streets or large parking lots.

7. Bicycle Access

Bicycle access is an important component of Gualala's downtown streetscape plan and livable communities in general. While it has been clear through the Phase I efforts and recent public input that a contingency of residents are concerned about the inclusion of bike lanes in the Highway 1 right-of-way over the use of on-street parking, it is inaccurate to describe the situation as selecting one at the other's expense. The Gualala Town Plan, 1995, which was adopted into the Mendocino County General Plan, 2002, calls for the development of the Class II bike lanes along Highway 1 in Gualala. Furthermore, the Gualala Town Plan, Local Coastal Plan, and California Coastal Commission all call for the elimination of on-street parking in downtown Gualala. Additionally, Highway 1 is identified as the Pacific Coast Bikeway and various regional and state plans call for bikeway improvements in the corridor. In addition to the safety improvements they will provide for both local and touring bicyclists in Gualala, bike lanes are widely accepted as providing a variety of community benefits. In general, bike lanes are considered to have a traffic calming effect, without the presence of bicyclists they serve as shoulders for vehicles on the highway, they provide a buffer between vehicular traffic and pedestrians, provide transportation alternatives, and help communities reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.



Bicyclist in travel lane

B. Recommended Highway 1 Right-of-way Improvements

Based on the Phase I CAP effort the new Highway 1 cross section is based on a 64' right-of-way as shown in Figure 2-2 below. The following is a discussion on the traffic analysis as it relates to turn movements, and recommendations to travel lane changes as well as new pedestrian crossings.

1. Center Turn Lanes

Future Year 2020 and 2030 traffic volumes were recently updated and analyzed as part of the Final State Route 1 Corridor Study Update, W-Trans, September 2008. The study generally focused only on the intersections of Highway 1/Old State Highway and Highway 1/Pacific Woods Road in the Gualala area. However, the analysis did

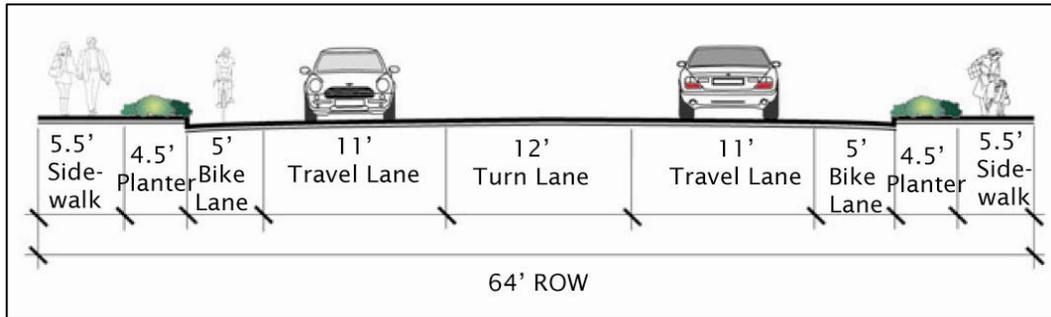


Fig. 2-2 Typical Road Section

result in the traffic volume projections which were used as part of this new Gualala study. Following is a summary of the findings and recommendations from the recent State Route 1 Corridor Study Update:

Although not indicated by the LOS analysis, the preponderance of driveways and commercial activity in Gualala warrants center left-turn channelization.

- Left turn lanes are warranted and recommended on Highway 1 at Old State Highway and Pacific Woods by the Year 2020.
- Intersection #1, Highway 1/Old State Highway - In addition to the southbound left turn lane recommended under Year 2020 Conditions, a two-way left turn lane south of the intersection should be provided to serve as refuge for left-turn movements to southbound Highway 1 by the Year 2030.

Further analysis of the new traffic volume projections indicate that left-turn channelization would be warranted for the following locations in addition to Old State Highway and Pacific Woods Road:

- Southbound left-turn on Highway 1 at Ocean Drive
- Southbound left-turn on Highway 1 at Center Street
- Northbound and southbound left-turn movements on Highway 1 at Sundstrom Mall and Surf Market properties.



No crosswalks at Ocean

Therefore, the recommended streetscape alternatives include left-turn channelization at these locations.

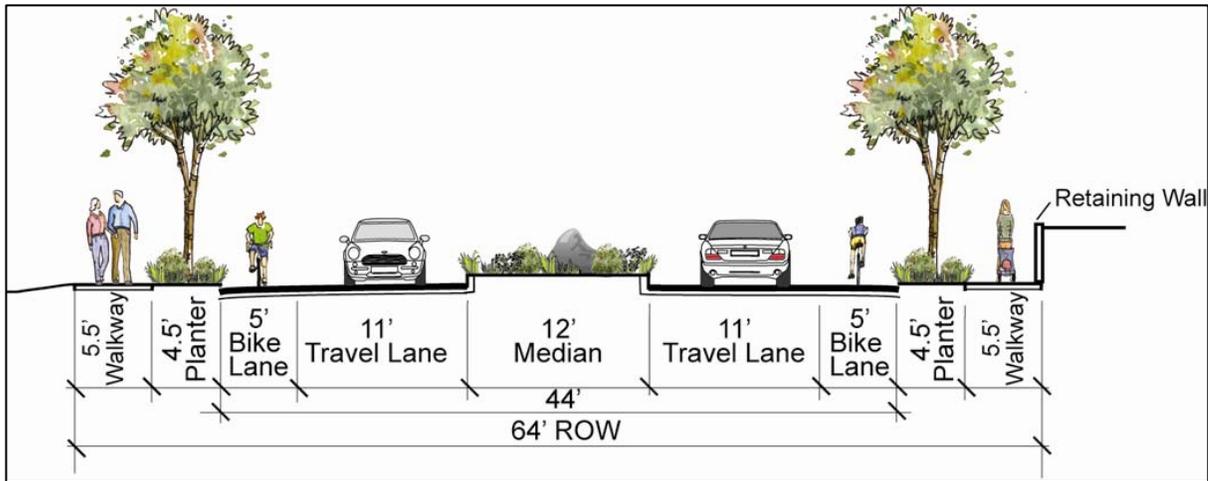


Fig. 2-3 Hwy 1 South of Ocean Drive

2. Recommended Turn Lane Treatments

a. Required

- Southbound left-turn lane on Highway 1 at Old State Highway
- Southbound left-turn lane on Highway 1 at Center Street
- Pedestrian refuge median at Coastal Trail-Highway 1 Crosswalk
- Center two-way left-turn lane on Highway 1 for Sundstrom Mall and Surf Market
- Pedestrian refuge median at Fort Gualala-Highway 1 Crosswalk
- Center Street-Highway 1 Crosswalk located on south side of intersection
- Pedestrian refuge median for Center Street-Highway Crosswalk
- Southbound left-turn lane on Highway 1 at Ocean Drive
- Pedestrian refuge median for Gualala Mobile Home Court



New turn lane at Old State Highway.

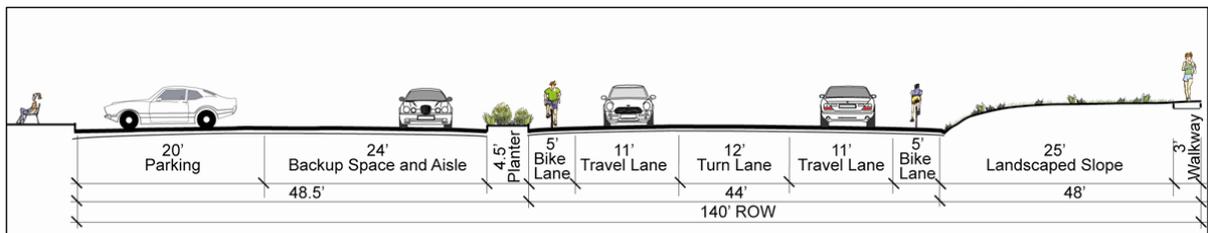


Fig. 2-4 Hwy 1 at the Bluff Parking

b. Optional

- Landscaped median in front of Gualala Hotel
- Extended median at Fort Gualala-Highway 1 Crosswalk
- Landscaped median in front of Pangaea restaurant
- Landscaped median in front of Sea Cliff Center
- Extended median at Ocean Drive-Highway 1 Crosswalk

c. Medians

Landscaped medians in lieu of the center turn lane can provide for traffic calming of traffic on Highway 1 as well as refuge for pedestrians crossing Highway 1.

3. Crosswalks

The Downtown Design Plan includes the development of new marked pedestrian crossings of Highway 1. The proposed crosswalks will help to achieve several objectives. Marked crosswalks will improve pedestrian safety in Gualala by increasing visibility, channelizing pedestrian crossings and reducing ‘jay-walking’, and by providing a visual cue to drivers to reduce speeds. According to workshop participants, crosswalks are most urgently needed at Center Street, near the Seacliff Center, and Ocean Drive. The existing Post Office/Surf Market crossing needs enhancement to make it more pronounced to drivers. In addition to the crosswalk locations identified below, a new crossing was proposed by the business community between the Gualala Hotel and the Breakers Motel. Since crosswalks are proposed within approximately 200 ft to both the north and south of the Hotel property, this proposal is considered redundant. Too many crosswalks may decrease their impact.

4. Crosswalk Treatments

The Gualala Town Plan stipulates that crosswalks shall be treated with smooth unit pavers and concrete bands. However, unit pavers are strongly discouraged by Caltrans due to maintenance and ADA compliance issues. For safety, decorative design treatments should be supplemented with high visibility crosswalk striping at all uncontrolled and mid-block crossing locations. The “continental” treatment (parallel bars) is recommended for greatest contrast as well as reduced maintenance requirements. Reflective delineators should be included on crosswalk rungs to increase visibility in inclement weather and low-lighting conditions. Crosswalks should be a minimum of 8 ft wide, however 10 - 12 ft is recommended. The existing crosswalk between the Post Office and the Surf Market is a sub-standard 6 ft wide.

5. Proposed Crosswalk Locations

a. Community Center to Bluff Trail

Install a mid-block crosswalk with pedestrian refuge island on Highway 1 from the southern trailhead for the Bluff Trail on the south side of the restaurant



Community Center crossing area

to the Gualala Community Center. The crosswalk will improve pedestrian safety between the Community Center and the bluff parking lot area during community events (such as the Pay 'N Take, Farmer's market, and others) as well as join directly to the dedicated Gualala Bluff Trail extension behind the Breakers Inn.

b. Gualala Hotel to Breakers Inn & Bones Restaurant (Optional)

Install a mid-block crosswalk with pedestrian refuge island across Highway 1 from the main entrance of the Gualala Hotel to the Breakers Inn. The crosswalk will improve pedestrian convenience and safety at night, when patrons cross between lodging, restaurants, and retail services. However, this does introduce a new crosswalk in close proximity to the Community Center crossing which could serve the same purpose.

c. Post Office to Surf Market

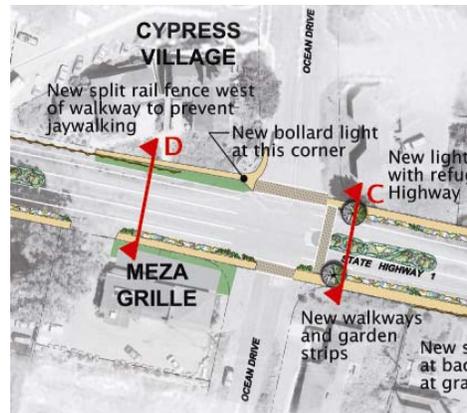
The existing marked crosswalk which extends from the Post Office to the Surf Supermarket will be moved just south of the existing location to increase storage for turning vehicles and reduce vehicle vs. pedestrian conflicts. The crosswalk would be widened and upgraded to the high visibility treatment recommended in the Design Plan.



Post Office substandard crossing

d. Forte Gualala

Install a midblock crosswalk with a refuge island between Forte Gualala and the variety of shops and services on the east side of Highway 1. This location is south of the Sea Cliff Center, approximately midway between Moonrise Drive and Ocean Drive.



New crosswalks at Ocean Drive

e. Ocean Drive/Highway 1 (southern intersection)

Install high visibility crosswalk treatments per the Design Plan, on three legs of the intersection. Crosswalks will be installed parallel to Highway 1 across the minor street and across Highway 1 on the south side of the intersection. This section of highway is located on a grade, therefore a pedestrian refuge island is proposed on the Highway 1 crossing to provide safe refuge and allow pedestrians to negotiate one direction of travel at a time.

f. Northern Ocean Drive/Highway 1 Intersection

Install a crosswalk across Highway 1 to a connector path leading to shops and restaurants at the Cypress Village and parallel to the Highway across the minor street. The crosswalk will connect a pathway along the west side of Highway 1 that will extend north to the Baker Town shopping center and the Gualala Mobile Court.

g. Gualala Mobile Court

Install a high visibility crosswalk with refuge island across Highway 1 on the north side of the Gualala Mobile Court driveway. Place advance “pedestrian crossing” signs to the north of the crosswalk.

C. Alternative Improvements

1. Optional Road Cross Section

For some sections of Highway 1, a center two-way left-turn lane is not required and medians are ‘optional.’ At these locations, the street cross-section can be reduced to two lanes and bike lanes can be added which would allow for less impact to adjacent properties. The section most impacted by this condition is between Moonrise Drive and the Sea Cliff Center where only the pedestrian crossing with refuge would be the full cross-section to accommodate the refuge island.

2. Optional Median Locations

- Landscaped median in front of Gualala Hotel
- Extended median at Fort Gualala-Highway 1 crosswalk
- Landscaped median in front of Pangaea parcel
- Extended median at Ocean Drive-Highway 1 crosswalk to Sea Cliff Center

D. Transit

The Mendocino Transit Authority, MTA Bus provides public transit in Gualala. Daily AM and PM service is provided to outlying communities and intermodal transit stations. Route 95 provides service between Point Arena and Santa Rosa and Route 75 provides service between Gualala (with the bus stop at Sundstrom Mall), Ukiah, and Fort Bragg; including a morning stop at Sea Ranch.

In addition to MTA, some private entities offer ride service in the Gualala area. South Coast Seniors, INC (SCS) provides low-cost, door-to-door demand-responsive transportation using an eight-passenger van. The Redwood Coast Medical Services partners with Community Resources Connection, a volunteer-based, non-profit organization, to provide access to medical facilities in a Dodge Caravan which is in turn provided by MTA. The Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians serves tribal members with a medical transport van and senior van.

School age children are currently bused to outlying towns to attend school. The Point Arena school district runs three routes and provides an average of 480 rides a day. The Ridge Route serves students living on the Ridge above Gualala. About 60 students use transportation provided by the Horicon Elementary School District. At this time, children are picked up on Church Street at the Catholic Church parking lot and are dropped off after school downtown near the video store. Previous safety concerns due to a lack of a marked crosswalk or sidewalks will be addressed with the new streetscape improvements.

In 2006, a very thorough and informative study titled Redwood Coast Community Transit Plan was prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. on behalf of Gualala's Action Network. This plan recommends developing a transit plaza to provide a safe, attractive, and centralized location for present and future ridership of various local transportation services. Recommended components include a loop driveway to provide an opportunity for transit vehicles to turn around, bays for a minimum of two vehicles, a shelter enclosed on at least three sides by glass to offer protection and visibility, lighting, bicycle racks, benches, signage, and a wall surface for posters and brochures. The plan also recommends providing consistent, significant signage as well as bus benches and shelters at stops to increase awareness of the service and traveler comfort. If a transit plaza is still desired by the community, further study regarding the potential development of a transit plaza is encouraged.

Sundstrom Mall (existing), Action Network, the Community Center, south of restaurant, and the Church on Church Street, were cited as appropriate places for new bus stops.