

### Chapter 3: DOWNTOWN STREETScape DESIGN PLAN

This section outlines the types of design treatments recommended for Highway 1 through downtown Gualala, from Old State Highway to the entry of the Gualala Mobile Court. This includes the location and types of materials for walkways, garden strips, crosswalks, planted medians and the limited and selective use of street furniture and lighting. This section begins with a brief description of the utility undergrounding issue to be addressed as part of the proposed streetscape improvements. The streetscape design improvements described in sections B through G below are reflected in the concept plan maps in Appendix A.

#### A. The Utility Undergrounding Issue

For some time, downtown Gualala has been on the list as the highest priority project in Mendocino County for undergrounding utility lines throughout downtown Gualala. While the funds have been set aside for pursuing this undergrounding and while AT&T has indicated as the leader of the undergrounding effort that they have completed their preliminary design for at least the first phase of an undergrounding project, the utility companies have been unable to release the drawings.

Apparently, the utility companies, working with the PUC and officials from Mendocino County have decided to recommend a four phase approach to the undergrounding with the first phase of that approach scheduled to occur between Center Street and Pacific Woods Drive. However, there are those in the community who do not want a piecemeal undergrounding project and would prefer it be installed in its entirety. There are others who would rather not wait any longer and have phase one be completed now, with the assurance that the other phases would be quick to follow.

Given the timing of this streetscape design effort, RRM Design Group was hoping to be able to coordinate the Streetscape Design Plans with the utility undergrounding plans – especially since the utility undergrounding needs to occur either before or at the same time as the street improvements are installed.

Due to the time sensitive nature of the grant funding for the Streetscape Design project, RRM Design Group has been directed by its client, the Mendocino Council of Government (MCOG) to complete this work and finish this report without the undergrounding information. This leaves this effort with two choices:

1. To complete the streetscape design effort with the proviso that the design may be subject to change due to the undergrounding design that will have to be resolved after the Streetscape design has been completed, or
2. To complete the Streetscape Design Plan with the expectation that the utility companies would work around the streetscape design improvements as proposed.

Since the utility companies have not been forthcoming in providing their undergrounding alignment plans, this document recommends that the utility companies design their improvements around the streetscape design contained in this chapter.

**B. Highway 1 “Main Street” Improvements**

As stated in the Circulation chapter the recommended improvements are based on a 64’ right-of-way with two 10’ pedestrian zones containing a 5.5’ walkway and a 4.5’ garden strip, two 11’ travel lanes, one 12’ center planted median with turn pockets, and two 5’ bike lanes. Please refer to Chapter 2 for more details on circulation.

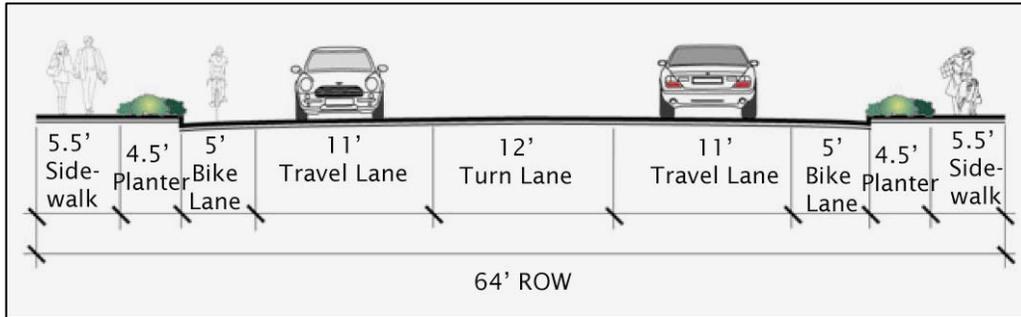


Figure 3-1. New road section for Highway 1

**C. Pedestrian Walkways**

The priority for improving livability in Gualala is to increase walkability and safety via a continuous network of pedestrian paths throughout the project area. The community has expressed a preference for a continuous separated walkway system along the highway, and that walkway should reflect the rural, casual, coastal town character. There is strong support for walkways on both sides of the highway from Center Street, on the south end of town, north to Ocean Drive at Cypress Village intersection. From Ocean Drive north the walkway should only be provided on the west side of the highway. The improvements described below are shown in the Streetscape Concept Plans in Appendix A.

Implementing defined walkways in the downtown core will also clearly delineate driveways so that vehicular turning movements in and out of parking areas are more controlled. All pedestrian facilities within the highway right-of way will need to be approved by Caltrans and meet ADA requirements.

**1. Walkway Material**

As favored by the community the path will be 5.5’ wide and constructed of a compacted stabilized soil mixture such as “Granitecrete”, in keeping with the casual coastal character. The manufacturing of this product will include local native soil and a close color match to the native soil. The “Granitecrete” color preference is a golden sand color and the path edges can be contained by a concrete curb or metal strip. Such material has been successfully used by other coastal communities and California State Parks due to its easy installation, durability, permeability, minimal maintenance requirements, and ADA compliance.



Desired walkway character

The path will end where it meets crosswalks and asphalt driveways. When there is a grade change and for ADA accessibility, standard concrete ramps or texture strips will be constructed as needed, using a similar color concrete to the path. Due to the pathway being set back from travel lanes by the garden strip, the area for traversing driveways should be fairly flat.

## 2. Walkway Locations

### a. from Center Street to Moonrise Drive

The walkway alignment is very similar throughout this area, with the exception of the southern end of the segment near Center Street. It will begin at the north of the bluff parking lot on the west, and will eventually provide a connection to the Gualala Bluff Trail alignment that may start at this parking lot (discussed further in Trail Connections section G. below).

Crossing over the highway at the north end of the parking lot, the walkway will then join up with a path on the eastern side of the highway, just south of Sundstrom Street. The path will angle up to the top of the gentle slope bank on the Gualala Community Center parcel and follows the top of bank to Center Street. This is to retain the drainage and the slope bank on the east side of Hwy 1. The bank could be well landscaped as part of an entry statement to town.

The 5.5' walkway will continue on both sides of the highway from Sundstrom Street to Moonrise Drive, separated from the travel lanes with a 4.5' garden strip.

### b. From Moonrise Drive to Ocean Drive

- 5.5' wide path on both sides of the highway from the Surf Market to Ocean Drive (with breaks at driveways).
- Preserve the mosaic at the Chevron station sidewalk and align new walkway in front of the mosaic.

### c. From Ocean Drive (south) to Ocean Drive (north)

- 5.5' wide path on the west side of the highway from the southern portion of Ocean Drive to the northern portion of Ocean Drive.
- 3' wide path on the east side to join with the Cypress Village path on the top of bank. This is to replace the existing dirt volunteer path in that area. (To be constructed of the same compacted soil material as the other downtown walkways.)

### d. From Ocean Drive (north) to Gualala Mobile Court

- 3' wide meandering path on the west side of the highway from Ocean to Sedalia Drive. The path alignment should be cut to keep grade changes to a minimum, preferably under 5% to comply with ADA regulations. The Caltrans right-of-way varies dramatically in this segment, and in some portions allows for larger curves in the path. Due to the topography, this

segment will require field verification to assure a feasible alignment, probably following the existing trail.

- No pathway will be provided on the east side in this area due to the drainage and terrain constraints.

#### D. Pedestrian Crosswalks

More crosswalks will allow safer crossing choices for residents and visitors and help to reduce jay-walking, as well as provide a visual cue to drivers to reduce speeds. According to workshop participants, crosswalks are most urgently needed at Center Street, near the Sea Cliff Center, and Ocean Drive (south). The existing Post Office Surf Market crossing needs enhancement to make it more pronounced to drivers.



Ornamental crosswalk treatment

In terms of impact and efficiency, the most desirable process would be for all crosswalks in the downtown core to be implemented simultaneously. The crosswalk at Gualala Mobile Court is less of a priority and could be installed later. Please see the Streetscape Plan maps (Appendix A) for more detail. The proposed improvements are within the parameters of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual.

##### 1. Crosswalk Treatments

The GTP stipulates that crosswalks shall be treated with smooth unit pavers and concrete bands. However, unit pavers are currently strongly discouraged by Caltrans due to maintenance and ADA compliance issues. Workshop participants indicated a preference for a “paver like” stamped concrete, which would be close to the same light color of the walkways, and contrast with the asphalt for more visibility. For safety the crosswalk would be bordered by 12” wide, highly-visible, bright, white stripes. The crosswalks will be a total of 10’ in width.

##### 2. Crosswalk Locations

- a. Center Street
- b. Post Office/Surf Market
- c. Forte Gualala
- d. Ocean Drive (South)
- e. Ocean Drive (North)
- f. Gualala Mobile Court



New crosswalk at Post Office

## E. Streetscape Landscaping

Landscaping will be provided in linear planters or garden strips adjacent to the walkways, and in medians. This will provide separation from the traffic, visually integrate the built environment into the surrounding landscape, and help establish a unifying element unique to Gualala. All publicly landscaped areas will follow a naturalistic yet recognizable theme, similar to the landscaping of the Post Office frontage. Plant materials will be dominantly coastal native grasses and shrubs, low-maintenance, and drought tolerant. They will be low growing, planted in informal clusters, and largely preserve views to the coast and businesses.

There is an opportunity to establish bioswales in the linear planters along the road. Bioswales are sunken planter areas that are densely planted, and designed to slow down, capture, and filtrate storm water run-off from the street. The bioswale would be 4' wide but can only be approximately 6-9" deep. Planters that run continuously for 100' are ideal. The bioswales could work in conjunction with the existing storm drainage system.

The slopes along the street vary between 0.5% and 10%. The slopes that are 4% or less, which occur from Ocean Drive to Old State Highway, are the easiest for swale installations and functions. North of Ocean Drive check dams may be necessary, approximately every 50 ft, to slow down the water velocity as it flows down the length of the swale. These check dams would be approximately 3-4" high and could be constructed of stone or concrete cross-channel structures that prevent the bottom of the swale from eroding. The check dams can be quite attractive and form an interesting cadence to the landscape. Similar projects have been constructed in Portland, Oregon. Caltrans would need to be consulted to approve the design and installation of the bioswales.

A plan for funding and scheduling of maintenance will need to be established to keep up the attractive appearance of such areas. This can be accomplished through the existing municipal facilities district or by forming a new entity such as a Private Business Improvement District. Local businesses or interest groups may be interested in "adopting" an area and contributing to its upkeep.

### 1. Garden Strips

#### a. Materials

The garden strips will be planted with a mixture of native grasses, evergreen low-lying shrubs, and flowering perennials. Ceanothus will be the accent plant used at crossings and intersections to provide visual cues to motorists and pedestrians.

#### b. Locations

- Generally the 4.5' wide linear planters run parallel to the walkways adjacent to the bike and travel lanes, throughout the



Garden strips and planted median

downtown. Breaks in the planter strips will coincide with the breaks of the walkways at driveways and intersections.

- A stand alone planter strip is provided at the southern bluff parking lot, south of the Breakers Inn. This 4' strip provides an attractive edge to the roadway as part of the entry statement to downtown. Additionally, the planter strip defines the access and egress to the parking lot, to help reduce traffic conflicts at the Center Street intersections.

## 2. Landscaped Medians

Similar to the garden strips, the medians will be planted with a mixture of native grasses, evergreen low-lying shrubs, and flowering perennials, and will also include random clusters of boulders and stones. Ceanothus will be the accent plant used where medians meet crossings and intersections to provide regular visual cues to the motorist and pedestrians.

The median locations are discussed in Chapter 2 The Circulation Plan.

## 3. Fencing

The purpose of a fence is three-fold: to increase safety by limiting jaywalking in critical areas of downtown, to provide protection from falling at grade changes next to the walkway, and to promote the rural ambiance of the town. The open fence design promotes good visibility into the adjacent properties. The fence design is inspired by the fencing along Highway 1 to the south.

### a. Materials

The fence will be 3' high and constructed of redwood or cedar for durability, with two or three horizontal split rails. The rails will attach to a single 3.5' high cedar posts with a rough finish, placed at 6 -8' intervals



Split rail fence character

### b. Locations

- Surf Supermarket parking lot- future grade change
- Sea Cliff Center- parking lot grade change
- Cypress Village Highway 1 frontage

## 4. Gualala Plant Types

The streetscape plantings for Gualala are designed to be beachy and natural in appearance, emphasizing native plants which will be drought tolerant and low maintenance. The community also showed a strong preference for natural boulders in the medians and occasional accent trees and shrubs. It's important to be aware that many drought tolerant native plants that go dormant do not look their best in late summer,



Colorful coastal plantings

but they do perk up again in fall. This can be compensated for by including some late summer performers, and providing strong foliage texture and color contrasts. Since it is not a verdant, high water use garden, it will not appear bright green all the time, but will have seasonal variety, change and interest. In this early conceptual design phase, we have selected the following plants to be featured in the streetscape design;

Low Groundcover Shrubs	Perennials (cont.)
Arctostaphylos nummularia	California Fuchsia, Zauschneria septrionale 'Mattole Select'
Sagebrush, Artemisia 'Silvermound'	Western Columbine (part shade), Aquilegia Formosa
Sonoma Sage, Salvia sonomensis hybrids	Iris douglasiana 'Pacific Coast Hybrids'
Little Sur Manzanita, Arctostaphylos edmundsii	Penstemon heterophyllus, Foothill Penstemon
Ceanothus gloriosus, California Glory Bush (Ceanothus)	Sisyrinchium bellum, Blue Eyed Grass
Thymus praecox arcticus, Mother of Thyme	
	Grasses and Sedges
Perennials	Idaho Fescue 'Siskiyou Blue'
Seaside Daisy, Erigeron glauca	Red Fescue, Festuca rubra
Coast Buckwheat, Eriogonum latifolium and others species	Meadow Sedge, Carex pansa
Silver Lupine, Lupinus	Gray Rush, Juncus patens
Golden Yarrow/Oregon Sunshine, Eriophyllum lanatum	Accent Trees and Shrubs
Chilean Strawberry, Fragaria chiloensis	Shore Pine, Pinus contorta
Yarrow, Achillea filipendula	Pacific Reed Grass, Calamagrostis nutkaensis
Coyote Mint, Monardella villosa 'Russian River'	Strawberry Tree, Arbutus marina

Please refer to Appendix B for images of the suggested plant types.

### 5. Possible Water Moratorium

New water connections may not be available due to a potential Department of Drinking Water moratorium on new meter installations. Only a very few irrigation-only meters exist in the CAP area. This means commercial customers will pay higher GCSD fees for landscape irrigation.

Depending on what time of year the new landscaping is installed it may require temporary irrigation. A possible solution is rain water harvesting in the winter months and store the water for summer irrigation use. Once the plants are established they will no longer require watering.

### F. Streetscape Furniture

The street furniture includes benches and trash receptacles in limited locations to provide a place to wait, enjoy the scenery and people watch. Optional materials and styles were visited many times by the community, each time with a different outcome regarding preferences. However, there is consensus that the furnishings should reflect a casual coastal character and be made of recycled or recyclable materials that are durable in the coastal zone and require little maintenance. Please refer to Appendix B for suggested street furniture styles.

## 1. Furniture Style

The bench seat will be made of recycled plastic material that looks like natural colored wood slats in a contemporary style. The slats will be supported by a simple coated metal frame with a muted green color coating to blend with the native landscaping.

## 2. Locations

Benches will be located at:

- Two at the bluff parking lot interpretive exhibit area, facing the ocean/river,
- the Post Office at the crosswalk,
- the mini-park in front of the Surf Motel adjacent to the walkway,
- the northeast corner of the Ocean Drive intersection, close to the crosswalk at Cypress Village,
- the Surf Market entry plaza



Desired bench character

## G. Streetscape Lighting

The purpose of street lighting within the downtown is to improve pedestrian safety while assuring night sky protection. The community requests that pole-type lighting be limited to busy intersections, crosswalks, and the midblock crosswalks. Bollard lighting was requested for other crossings and walkway dark spots where there is no ambient light from adjacent buildings. Solar-powered lighting is optimum. Lighting is not provided near gas stations or buildings with night security lights adjacent to the walkway. Please refer to Appendix B for the lighting styles.

Electrical service to the new lights needs to be coordinated with the AT&T/PG&E utility undergrounding project by providing potential future tie-ins to the grid, at the designated locations, through the use of “stub-outs.”



Solar street lamp character

### 1. Pole Lights

Pole lights will be used to light crosswalks on both ends of the crosswalk in limited areas. The poles will be the shortest pedestrian scale possible to cast light on the crosswalk and the light source will be directed downward to preserve the night sky.

#### a. Style

A 12' high post, with solar powered lamp. The primary choice would be a cypress or redwood post left to age to a grey color. If a wood post is not available with the solar powered lamp, a light grey coated or galvanized metal post will be substituted.

b. Locations

Pole lights will be located at:

- The bluff parking lot at the south end of town/Community Center crosswalk,
- The Post Office crosswalk,
- The Forte Gualala crosswalk,
- The Ocean Drive crosswalk,
- The Gualala Mobile Court crosswalk.

## 2. Bollard Lights

Low bollard lights will serve two purposes: to light the pedestrian crossings at cross streets to the highway, and to light dark spots along the walkway.

a. Style

2' high square vented wooden post, with light directed downward.

b. Locations

Bollards will be located at:

- East side path on top of the Community Center slope bank,
- Sundstrom Street on both sides of the crossing,
- The bench at Surf Motel mini park,
- West side walkway between Forte Gualala and Sea Cliff Center,
- East side walkway south of the Smoke Shop lot,
- Northeast corner of Ocean Drive intersection,
- Both sides of Ocean Drive (north),
- Under the trees before the restaurant (pizza),
- After the pizza restaurant,
- Top of the hill before the Mobile court,

## H. California Coastal Trail (Gualala Bluff Trail)

The Gualala Bluff trail is part of the California Coastal Trail system.

### 1. Current Bluff Trail

The first section of the Gualala Bluff Trail (phase 1 of trail construction) extends from behind Sea Cliff Center to the Surf Motel. Vertical access is available through the parking lot of the Surf Motel where the trail currently exists. The second segment of this trail (phase 2) should extend from the Surf Motel south to behind the Breakers Inn and Restaurant. Unfortunately a portion of



Gualala Bluff Trail section behind Inn

the trail behind the Surf Supermarket, at the south end of the parcel, has washed out and is in extended negotiations for repair with the Coastal Commission. A temporary trail is located behind the Surf Center, and behind the Breakers Inn and restaurant.

Negotiations are currently underway between the owner of Breakers Inn and Restaurant (Bones) and the Coastal Commission to determine the location and nature of vertical access easement to the trail between the Inn and the restaurant. A trail connection has been proposed from the southern bluff parking lot (across from the Community Center) to the trail either via a stairway or a horizontal access behind and below the restaurant. These alignments are currently being evaluated by the Coastal Commission.

## 2. Future Bluff Trail Connections

Some workshop participants requested additional vertical access to this trail:

- The north side of bluff parking lot at the south end of town across from the Community Center.
- If possible formalize the bluff trail access through the Sea Cliff Center.
- The Forte Gualala parcel adjacent to the northern property line with the Seacliff Center.

However, these additional vertical accesses will require negotiation with the property owners for dedication of a public access easement, or relocation. Also, some portions of the trail and its vertical accesses should be improved to meet ADA accessibility standards, such as a viewing area. It should be noted that it is not feasible to make the majority of the trail ADA accessible because of the natural topography constraints. A flat area behind the Surf Center offers one of the few areas suitable for ADA access and an ADA parking spot.

### I. Way Finding Signage

A system of way finding signage should be designed and used to direct people to important services, recreational opportunities, and points of interest in Gualala. The materials and locations as discussed below are a result of the public input received during the outreach process. Highway regulatory signage (speed limits, no parking, bike lane, etc.) should be clustered together on the same pole to avoid visual clutter of multiple poles and signs along the street.

#### 1. Materials

The signage system should be comprehensively designed and made of carved wood with white raised lettering.

#### 2. Locations

The signs should be located at key pedestrian areas such as crosswalks, and direct people to:

- Coastal Access
- Shopping



Sign style example

- Community & Emergency Services
- Community Landmarks
- Public Parking Areas