



## COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION  
DRIVE, ROOM 102A  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

### SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 5/25/2021

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Permit Sonoma

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Gary Helfrich, 565-2404

**Vote Requirement:** Informational Only

**Supervisorial District(s):** All

**Title:**

Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan Update

**Recommended Action:**

Accept report on Local Coastal Plan update (Informational Only)

**Executive Summary:**

The Local Coastal Plan Update report will provide an opportunity for staff to update the public and the Board of Supervisors on the status of and receive direction on: 1) an update of the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan including an overview of outreach conducted since the November 10, 2020 Board of Supervisors Workshop; 2) agency input; and 3) progress towards development of policy options to be considered by the Planning Commission.

**Discussion:**

**Background**

The California Coastal Commission, in partnership with local governments such as the County of Sonoma, adopt Local Coastal Programs to protect coastal resources and guide coastal development consistent with the California Coastal Act. In Sonoma County, the Local Coastal Program consists of the Local Coastal Plan, Coastal Zoning Ordinance, and Implementation Manual. The Local Coastal Program, certified by the Coastal Commission, transfers permitting authority from the Coastal Commission to Sonoma County for consideration of development proposals in the Coastal Zone except for tidelands, submerged lands, and public trust lands. The Legislature has mapped the Coastal Zone as generally covering land from the mean high tide line to the first major ridge inland of the ocean.

In June 2015, Permit Sonoma published the Preliminary Draft Local Coastal Plan and conducted five public workshops during Summer 2015. Revisions began in response to the public feedback but staffing and fiscal constraints resulted in project delays. In 2018, Permit Sonoma secured a grant from the Coastal Commission to complete the revisions. In September 2019, the Public Review Draft Local Coastal Plan was published and a series of six public workshops were held, with the final workshop presented to your Board on November 10, 2020. While over 400 comments were received from individuals, interest groups, agencies, and research organizations, a need was identified to address specific topic of interest and hold topic-based workshops with subject matter experts. Workshops were held between February 25, 2021 and March 5, 2021

**Update Progress Summary:**

The Local Coastal Plan Update will be a modern web-accessible and easy-to-use document with digital maps

that updates goals, objectives, and policies in five key areas: 1) adaptation to climate change, including sea level rise; 2) preservation of public access; 3) protection of water resources; 4) hazard mitigation; and 5) protection of biotic resources. Work towards this continues, with updated mapping of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas, sea level rise forecasts, and fire hazard areas.

Editing of the descriptive text within the draft plan and creation of an index by topic are complete as are comparison tables showing how policies have evolved from the current Local Coastal Plan, to the Public Review Draft and finally to Planning Commission recommendations. Staff is also completing work to consolidate redundant policies, correct technical errors identified to date, and resolve internal inconsistencies. Attachment 5 provides a reformatted version of the Agricultural Resource Element as an example of content editing and reformatting. The policy comparison table is shown in Attachment 6.

At the conclusion of the six planned public workshops, Permit Sonoma staff determined that additional outreach was needed for specific topics that were raised by the public during these workshops, and added a series of Topic-Specific Workshops . Attendance at these workshops ranged from 25 to 50 participants and were held between February 25, 2021 and March 5, 2021 on the following topics:

Climate Change Adaptation (February 25): This workshop was presented in partnership with NOAA's Greater Farallones Coastal Resilience Working Group. Workshop focused on science that is being used to inform our policies on sea level rise, depletion of groundwater resources, planned retreat strategies, and greenhouse gas reduction strategies specific to coastal development.

Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units (March 1): This workshop focused on the challenge of providing adequate housing in the Coastal Zone within the context of the Coastal Act, which identifies residential development as a low priority land use. Coastal Commission guidance on accommodating Accessory Dwelling Units (Attachment 3) was presented as was a policy option. Consistent with this guidance, Junior Accessory Dwelling Units could be exempt from needing a Coastal Permit. Accessory Dwelling Units could qualify for a waiver from needing a Coastal Permit in areas where there is no potential for adverse effect on coastal resources, such as developed areas within urban service areas in Bodega Bay and The Sea Ranch.

Wildfire Hazard Mitigation and Resiliency (March 3): This workshop was co-presented by the Permit Sonoma Fire Prevention Division. Policy recommendations were discussed to manage fuel loads in non-commercial timberlands and coordinating best practices for improving wildfire resiliency with resource protection policies of the Coastal Act.

Mapping and Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (March 5): Permit Sonoma Natural Resources section provided background on our new mapping of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA). In response to comments that mapping did not include the best available data and science, this workshop introduced improved mapping of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (Attachment 2), developed with assistance from:

- NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Forest Service
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife Biogeographic Data Branch
- California Natural Diversity Database

- U.C. Davis Bodega Marine Laboratory
- Sonoma County Agricultural + Open Space District

In addition to the topic workshop presentations, the revised ESHA maps are currently available on the project webpage for public review and comment.

### **Pesticide and Vacation Rentals Workshop Format Changes**

In addition to these workshops, Permit Sonoma had initially proposed workshops on pesticide regulation and vacation rentals. These workshops were initially postponed to provide time for additional research and analysis. After meeting the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner, staff felt that that pesticide regulation is a topic that is best presented in a detailed policy paper outlining the federal, state, and local regulatory framework. The policy paper will be published in late April and circulated to stakeholders for input and comment.

Vacation Rentals, also referred to as Short-Term Rentals, are characterized by the California Coastal Commission as an important component of coastal access; Attachment 4 outlines the Coastal Commission position on regulating vacation rentals. This policy memo recognizes the need to balance public access, protection of coastal resources, preserving community character, and local housing needs. Initial discussions with Coastal Commission staff indicate that utilizing standards for the regulation of vacation rental operations is preferred over absolute prohibitions within a specific area. The Draft Local Coastal Plan Update includes Vacation Rental Standards Program (C-LU-1), which is a program calling for the development of comprehensive standards for Vacation Rentals in the Coastal Zone.

Based on direction from your Board on December 15, 2020, Permit Sonoma staff is working with the community to develop policy options for an update to the existing countywide Vacation Rental Ordinance. While the Coastal Zone includes additional considerations for the regulation of vacation rentals, such as the need for preserving public access, Permit Sonoma staff will begin a comprehensive outreach campaign throughout the county that will include a focused approach to vacation rental policy in the Coastal Zone. Additionally, Permit Sonoma staff will be meeting with Coastal Commission staff to develop policy options that balance visitor accommodations providing lodging for visitors to in our coastal areas with community concerns regarding potential adverse impacts associated with vacation rentals.

Next steps for adoption of the Local Coastal Plan will be:

- Late April 2021: Planning Commission Draft published
- May 27, 2021: Planning Commission Local Coastal Plan Hearing
- August 31, 2021: Board of Supervisors Local Coastal Plan Hearing
- October 2021: Coastal Commission certification of Local Coastal Plan.

### **Prior Board Actions:**

Current Local Coastal Plan adoption 2001

### **FISCAL SUMMARY**

### **Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

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**Agenda Date:** 5/25/2021

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N/A

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: Public Review Draft Local Coastal Plan with Appendices

Attachment 2: Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) maps

Attachment 3: California Coastal Commission ADU Policy Guidance

Attachment 4: California Coastal Commission Short Term Rental Policy Memo

Attachment 5: Reformatted Agricultural Resource Element

Attachment 6: Policy Comparison Tables

**Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:**

N/A