

# Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar*

P.O. Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 - [www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org](http://www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org)

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Date: March 22, 2017

To: Supervisor Don Horsley  
Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director

Cc: Nancy Cave, CCC North Central Coast District Manager

From: Midcoast Community Council/ Lisa Ketcham, Chair

Subject: **Neighborhood Commercial (C-1/S-3) Zoning Standards for Midcoast**

Recent hotel development proposals for Montara have raised awareness of the development standards included or lacking in the C-1 Zoning Ordinance and S-3 zoning overlay that apply to neighborhood commercial districts in the Midcoast.

The C-1 ordinance is generic, countywide, and appears to date from the 1950's. Custom updates for unincorporated North Fair Oaks (NFO) and West Menlo Park (WMP) were done in the 1990's, but the C-1 for the Midcoast remains basically unchanged. The S-3 overlay adds very little to the C-1 regulations.

- There is no mention of community character or neighborhood scale.
- There are no required setbacks or lot coverage maximum.
- Averaging methods for calculating building height can result in 36-foot roof peak at street front on a mildly sloped lot even though height limit is 28 feet.
- There are no landscaping requirements or screening requirements for outdoor storage or parking.
- There are no performance standards.
- Signage regulations that are needed to preserve our scenic highway are inadequate as to number and size limitation compared with NFO, WMP, and the City of Half Moon Bay. Additional sign standards are provided in the 1976 Community Design Manual, but they are not well known or easy to find.
- Building with no side setbacks, as seen on the western block of Princeton shoreline, results in walling off ocean views, which could occur between Main Street (route of the Coastal Trail) and Highway 1 in Montara.

The C-1 ordinance has no "Purposes" section to provide goals for the uses and development standards included. For Midcoast Neighborhood Commercial Districts, we can look to the Goals and Objectives in the adopted Montara/ Moss Beach/ El Granada Community Plan, incorporated by reference into the LCP:

- 1.2 Encourage good design in new construction which reflects the character, and is compatible with the scale, of the neighborhood in which it is located.

- 2.1 Concentrate commercial activity in established centers to strengthen and enhance the centers as community focal points, and provide separate areas for commercial recreation to serve visitors.
- 2.8 Locate commercial recreation activities in designated areas away from community commercial centers.
- 2.9 Employ the design guidelines of the Community Design Manual in all new commercial development.
- 7.1 Preserve and enhance the visual qualities of the coastal community which give it a unique character and distinguish it from other places.
- 7.2b Maintain the small-town character of the area by preventing construction of massive structures out of scale with the community.

Midcoast neighborhood commercial development standards should better support LCP policies:

- 8.12.b Locate and design new development and landscaping so that ocean views are not blocked from public viewing points such as public roads and publicly-owned lands.
- 8.13.a.4 Design structures that are in scale with the character of their setting and blend rather than dominate or distract from the overall view of the urbanscape.
- 11.4 Permit visitor-serving facilities that ... do not subvert the unique small town, rural character of the individual communities on the Coastside.

County Parking Ordinance requirements for hotels also appear to date from the 1950's. Required parking space per bedroom is 1:4 for hotels, but 1:1 for motels. This disparity has no apparent rationale in the Midcoast where guests can only realistically arrive by private automobile, and overflow parking will impact the surrounding neighborhood.

Development standards should clearly and simply guide appropriate development that preserves our unique coastal small town character, in order to avoid long and contentious permit approval cycles and appeals. Likely there will be more applications for development in Midcoast neighborhood commercial districts due to new water connections available in Montara and Moss Beach after decades of moratorium. Thriving, attractive, bike/pedestrian-friendly neighborhood commercial districts would improve quality of life, strengthen the local economy, and reduce residents' dependence on highway travel.

There has been consensus during community discussions at MCC meetings on March 8 and 22, that there is a need for an updated Neighborhood Commercial ordinance specific for the Midcoast. MCC urges your support for this.

Thank you for your consideration. Accompanying slide presentation is at the link: <http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/mtgs-com2017/2017-03-22-C1-zoning-MCCattachment.pdf>