

TASK 6 – Revise design review standards to complement existing house size limits and promote the preferred scale and character of the Midcoast community.

BACKGROUND

Design review is to evaluate development proposals for compliance with criteria that assures community compatibility with regard to site planning, architectural design, building materials, colors, landscaping, etc. Since September 2001, the Coastside Design Review Committee (CDRC) has evaluated all residential development in the R-1 zoning district, while the remaining Midcoast development is reviewed by staff.

The Midcoast community has long requested that existing design review regulations be revised and updated. In 2001-2003, the CDRC developed draft design review standards principally for single-family residential development.

Issues include extent of compatibility between new and existing development, protecting the natural setting, and balancing individual architectural desire with community-wide objectives.

ALTERNATIVES

There are two alternatives which follow the same format, but vary in regulatory degree. They are:

- **CDRC Alternative** – developed by the Coastside Design Review Committee.
- **Non-CDRC Alternative** – developed by a subgroup of participants in the workshop process.

The **CDRC Alternative** is generally more restrictive than the **Non-CDRC Alternative**. The key differences are discussed below:

Background – Specifies where the design standards apply, their purpose, and how the standards are to be used in conjunction with other County regulations.

- CDRC Alternative – The purpose of the design standards is to encourage new homes with individual character, while ensuring that they complement neighboring houses, the overall neighborhood character and the surrounding natural setting. Design changes may be required, providing that the resulting house size or height is not substantially less than that permitted by zoning.
- Non-CDRC Alternative – The purpose of the design standards is to assist property owners in designing residences within the context of community character. Design changes may not be required which have the effect of reducing house size or height to less than that permitted by zoning.

Neighborhood Definition and Neighborhood Character – Defines key terms including “neighborhood” and “neighborhood character.” There are no major differences between the two alternatives.

Site Planning and Structure Placement – New homes should be integrated with the natural setting and complement other homes in the neighborhood.

- CDRC Alternative – Homes should be designed to fit their site, rather than a site altered to fit a proposed home. Minimize tree and vegetation removal, make the finished grade similar to the existing grade, and avoid streams and other natural drainage features.
- Non-CDRC Alternative – A site may be altered for home construction. Only native tree and vegetation removal must be minimized, finished grade may conflict with existing grade on certain sloped sites, and structures need only avoid locating “immediately adjacent” to streams.

Elements of Design – New homes should have proportional, consistent architectural features, and complement the (1) mass, shape and scale, (2) architectural style, (3) roof design, and (4) materials and colors of other neighborhood homes.

- CDRC Alternative – Requires that (1) exposed under floor areas be minimized, (2) second stories be centered and of minimal size where one-story homes predominate, and (3) roof massing be reduced, but allows some flat roof portions.
- Non-CDRC Alternative – Does not require that: (1) exposed under floor areas be minimized, (2) second stories be centered and of minimal size, and (3) allows larger/higher flat roof portions.

Remaining sections (with fewer differences between the alternatives) include: Additional Site Planning and Design Considerations, Landscaping, Paved Areas, Fences, Lighting and Noise, Utilities, and Second Units.

WORKSHOP OUTCOME

48% of the workshop speakers endorsed the Coastside Design Review Committee (CDRC) alternative.

52% of the workshop speakers endorsed the Non-Coastside Design Review Committee (Non-CDRC) alternative.

MIDCOAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

The Midcoast Community Council recommends that the County adopt the CDRC alternative.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission endorse the CDRC alternative, subject to the qualification that required design changes shall not have the effect of reducing house size more than 5% of that allowed by zoning development standards, or increase house size or height more than 5% of that allowed by the zoning development standards.