

# ***VISUAL RESOURCES COMPONENT***

## **NATURAL FEATURES--LANDFORMS**

### 8.1 Definition of Landforms

Define landforms as natural topographic and landscape features which include, but are not restricted to, ridgelines, hillsides, canyons, coastal terraces, headlands, mountains, rock outcroppings, hills, cliffs and bluffs, sand dunes, beaches, wetlands, estuaries, streams, and arroyos.

### 8.2 Beaches

Prohibit permanent structures on open sandy beaches except facilities required for public health and safety (i.e., beach erosion control structures).

### 8.3 Sand Dunes

Prohibit development or uses that would alter the natural appearance of dunes, significantly hamper natural dune movement, conflict with the visual form of the dune ridgelines, destroy dune-stability vegetation, or require sand removal.

### 8.4 Cliffs and Bluffs

- a. Prohibit development on bluff faces except public access stairways where deemed necessary and erosion control structures which are in conformity with coastal policies on access and erosion.
- b. Set back bluff top development and landscaping from the bluff edge (i.e., decks, patios, structures, trees, shrubs, etc.) sufficiently far to ensure it is not visually obtrusive when viewed from the shoreline except in highly developed areas where adjoining development is nearer the bluff edge, or in special cases where a public facility is required to serve the public safety, health, and welfare.

### 8.5 Location of Development

- a. Require that new development be located on a portion of a parcel where the development (1) is least visible from State and County Scenic Roads, (2) is least likely to significantly impact views from public viewpoints, and (3) is consistent with all other LCP requirements, best preserves the visual and open space qualities of the parcel overall. Where conflicts in complying with this requirement occur, resolve them in a manner which on balance most protects significant coastal resources on the parcel, consistent with Coastal Act Section 30007.5.

Public viewpoints include, but are not limited to, coastal roads, roadside rests and vista points, recreation areas, trails, coastal accessways, and beaches.

This provision does not apply to enlargement of existing structures, provided that the size of the structure after enlargement does not exceed 150% of the pre-existing floor area, or 2,000 sq. ft., whichever is greater.

This provision does not apply to agricultural development to the extent that application of the provision would impair any agricultural use or operation on the parcel. In such cases, agricultural development shall use appropriate building materials, colors, landscaping and screening to eliminate or minimize the visual impact of the development.

- b. Require, including by clustering if necessary, that new parcels have building sites that are not visible from State and County Scenic Roads and will not significantly impact views from other public viewpoints. If the entire property being subdivided is visible from State and County Scenic Roads or other public viewpoints, then require that new parcels have building sites that minimize visibility from those roads and other public viewpoints.

#### 8.6 Streams, Wetlands, and Estuaries

- a. Set back development from the edge of streams and other natural waterways a sufficient distance to preserve the visual character of the waterway.
- b. Prohibit structural development which will adversely affect the visual quality of perennial streams and associated riparian habitat, except for those permitted by Sensitive Habitats Component Policies.
- c. Retain the open natural visual appearance of estuaries and their surrounding beaches.
- d. Retain wetlands intact except for public accessways designed to respect the visual and ecological fragility of the area and adjacent land.

#### \*8.7 Development on Skylines and Ridgelines

- a. Prohibit the location of development, in whole or in part, on a skyline or ridgeline, or where it will project above a skyline or ridgeline, unless there is no other developable building site on the parcel.

Consistent with Policy 9.18, a site of greater than 30% slope may be deemed developable if it is the only other building site on the parcel and can be developed consistent with all other applicable LCP policies.

Prohibit the location of development, in whole or in part, on a skyline, or where it will project above a skyline, when a developable building site exists on a ridgeline.

A skyline is the line where sky and land masses meet, and ridgelines are the tops of hills or hillocks normally viewed against a background of other hills (General Plan Policy 4.7).

- b. Where no other developable building site exists on a parcel, limit development on a skyline or ridgeline to 18 feet in height from the natural or finished grade, whichever is lower.
- c. Prohibit the creation of new parcels which have no developable building site other than on a skyline or ridgeline.

## **NATURAL FEATURES--VEGETATIVE FORMS**

### 8.8 Definition of Vegetative Forms

Define vegetative forms as naturally occurring or introduced vegetation that grows in the Coastal Zone.

### 8.9 Trees

- a. Locate and design new development to minimize tree removal.
- b. Employ the regulations of the Significant Tree Ordinance to protect significant trees (38 inches or more in circumference) which are located in urban areas zoned Design Review (DR).
- c. Employ the regulations of the Heritage Tree Ordinance to protect unique trees which meet specific size and locational requirements.
- d. Protect trees specifically selected for their visual prominence and their important scenic or scientific qualities.
- e. Prohibit the removal of trees in scenic corridors except by selective harvesting which protects the existing visual resource from harmful impacts or by other cutting methods necessary for development approved in compliance with LCP policies and for opening up the display of important views from public places, i.e., vista points, roadways, trails, etc.
- f. Prohibit the removal of living trees in the Coastal Zone with a trunk circumference of more than 55 inches measured 4 1/2 feet above the average surface of the ground, except as may be permitted for development under the regulations of the LCP, or permitted under the Timber Harvesting Ordinance, or for reason of danger to life or property.

- g. Allow the removal of trees which are a threat to public health, safety, and welfare.

#### 8.10 Vegetative Cover

(with the exception of crops grown for commercial purposes)

Replace vegetation removed during construction with plant materials (trees, shrubs, ground cover) which are compatible with surrounding vegetation and is suitable to the climate, soil, and ecological characteristics of the area.

### **STRUCTURAL AND COMMUNITY FEATURES--URBAN AREAS AND RURAL SERVICE CENTERS**

#### 8.11 Definition of Urban

Define urban areas and rural service centers in accordance with the Locating and Planning New Development Component Policies 1.3 and 1.10.

#### 8.12 General Regulations

- a. Apply the Design Review (DR) Zoning District to urban areas of the Coastal Zone:
  - (1) For one- and two-family development in the Midcoast, apply the design standards contained in Section 6565.20.
  - (2) For all other development, apply the design standards contained in Section 6565.17 and the design criteria set forth in the Community Design Manual.
- 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 Special Design Guidelines for Coastal Communities

##### a. Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada-Miramar

- (1) Design structures that fit the topography of the site and do not require extensive cutting, grading, or filling for construction.
- (2) Employ the use of natural materials and colors that blend with the vegetative cover of the site.
- (3) Use pitched roofs that are surfaced with non-reflective materials except for the employment of solar energy devices. The limited use of flat roofs may be allowed if necessary to reduce view impacts or to

accommodate varying architectural styles that are compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

- (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.
- (5) To the extent feasible, design development to minimize the blocking of views to or along the ocean shoreline from Highway 1 and other public viewpoints between Highway 1 and the sea. Public viewpoints include coastal roads, roadside rests and vista points, recreation areas, trails, coastal accessways, and beaches. This provision shall not apply in areas west of Denniston Creek zoned either Coastside Commercial Recreation or Waterfront.
- (6) In areas east of Denniston Creek zoned Coastside Commercial Recreation, the height of development may not exceed 28 feet from the natural or finished grade, whichever is lower.

b. Princeton-by-the-Sea

(1) Commercial Development

Design buildings which reflect the nautical character of the harbor setting, are of wood or shingle siding, employ natural or sea colors, and use pitched roofs.

(2) Industrial Development

Employ architectural detailing, subdued colors, textured building materials, and landscaping to add visual interest and soften the harsh lines of standard or stock building forms normally used in industrial districts.

c. San Gregorio

Encourage new buildings to incorporate traditional design features found in the San Gregorio House and other houses in the community, i.e., clean and simple lines, steep roof slopes, placement of windows and doors at regular intervals, doors and windows of equal proportions, and wood construction. Require remodeling of existing buildings to retain and respect their traditional architectural features, if any.

d. Pescadero

Encourage new buildings to incorporate architectural design features found in the historic buildings of the community (see inventory listing), i.e., clean

and simple lines, precise detailing, steep roof slopes, symmetrical relationship of windows and doors, wood construction, white paint, etc. Require remodeling of existing buildings to retain and respect their traditional architectural features, if any.

## **STRUCTURAL AND COMMUNITY FEATURES--RURAL**

### 8.14 Definition of Rural

Define rural as lands indicated on the LCP Land Use Map for rural use.

### \*8.15 Coastal Views

Prevent development (including buildings, structures, fences, unnatural obstructions, signs, and landscaping) from substantially blocking views to or along the shoreline from coastal roads, roadside rests and vista points, recreation areas, trails, coastal accessways, and beaches.

### 8.16 Landscaping

- a. Use plant materials to integrate the manmade and natural environments and to soften the visual impact of new development.
- b. Protect existing desirable vegetation. Encourage, where feasible, that new planting be common to the area.

### \*8.17 Alteration of Landforms; Roads and Grading

- a. Require that development be located and designed to conform with, rather than change landforms. Minimize the alteration of landforms as a consequence of grading, cutting, excavating, filling or other development.
- b. To the degree possible, ensure restoration of pre-existing topographic contours after any alteration by development, except to the extent necessary to comply with the requirements of Policy 8.18.
- c. Control development to avoid the need to construct access roads visible from State and County Scenic Roads. Existing private roads shall be shared wherever possible. New access roads may be permitted only where it is demonstrated that use of existing roads is physically or legally impossible or unsafe. New roads shall be (1) located and designed to minimize visibility from State and County Scenic Roads and (2) built to fit the natural topography and to minimize alteration of existing landforms and natural characteristics.

This provision does not apply to agricultural development to the extent that application of the provision would impair any agricultural use or operation,

or convert agricultural soils. In such cases, build new access roads to minimize alteration of existing landforms and natural characteristics.

#### 8.18 Development Design

- a. Require that development (1) blend with and be subordinate to the environment and the character of the area where located, and (2) be as unobtrusive as possible and not detract from the natural, open space or visual qualities of the area, including but not limited to siting, design, layout, size, height, shape, materials, colors, access and landscaping.

The colors of exterior materials shall harmonize with the predominant earth and vegetative colors of the site. Materials and colors shall absorb light and minimize reflection. Exterior lighting shall be limited to the minimum necessary for safety. All lighting, exterior and interior, must be placed, designed and shielded so as to confine direct rays to the parcel where the lighting is located.

Except for the requirement to minimize reflection, agricultural development shall be exempt from this provision. Greenhouse development shall be designed to minimize visual obtrusiveness and avoid detracting from the natural characteristics of the site.

- b. Require screening to minimize the visibility of development from scenic roads and other public viewpoints. Screening shall be by vegetation or other materials which are native to the area or blend with the natural environment and character of the site.
- c. Require that all non-agricultural development minimize noise, light, dust, odors and other interference with persons and property off the development site.

#### 8.19 Colors and Materials

- a. Employ colors and materials in new development which blend, rather than contrast, with the surrounding physical conditions of the site.
- b. Prohibit highly reflective surfaces and colors except those of solar energy devices.

#### 8.20 Scale

Relate structures in size and scale to adjacent buildings and landforms.

### \*8.21 Commercial Signs

- a. Prohibit off-premise commercial signs except for seasonal temporary agricultural signs.
- b. Design on-premise commercial signs as an integral part of structure they identify and which do not extend above the roofline.
- c. Prohibit brightly illuminated colored, rotating, reflective, blinking, flashing or moving signs, pennants, or streamers.
- d. Design and minimize information and direction signs to be simple, easy-to-read, and harmonize with surrounding elements.

### 8.22 Utilities in State Scenic Corridors

- a. Install new distribution lines underground.
- b. Install existing overhead distribution lines underground where they are required to be relocated in conjunction with street improvements, new utility construction, etc.
- c. Exceptions to a. and b. may be approved by the Planning Commission where it is not physically practicable due to topographic features; however, utilities shall not be substantially visible from any public road or developed public trails.

### 8.23 Utilities in County Scenic Corridors

- a. Install new distribution lines underground, except as provided in b.
- b. For all development, exceptions may be approved by the Planning Commission when: (1) it is not physically practicable due to topographic features, (2) there are agricultural land use conflicts or (3) development is for farm labor housing. In addition, for building permits, exceptions may be approved by the Planning Commission for financial hardships. In each case, however, utilities shall not be substantially visible from any public road or developed public trail.

### 8.24 Large Agricultural Structures

Require large agricultural structures (i.e., greenhouses or buildings for the storage of farm or ranch equipment, products, or related uses) to employ a combination of the following criteria depending on the design problems of the site:

- a. Require agricultural equipment storage buildings to be constructed of materials or painted colors which blend with the natural vegetative cover of the site.
- b. Employ landscaping to screen structures from public view.

## **SPECIAL FEATURES**

### 8.25 Definition

Define special features as unique structural, land, or vegetative forms that possess or exhibit distinctive qualities that set them apart from all others, contribute significantly to the scenic resources of the Coastal Zone, and are listed in the Inventory of Special Features in the LCP.

### 8.26 Structural Features

Employ the regulations of the Historical and Cultural Preservation Ordinance to protect any structure or site listed as an Official County or State Historic Landmark or is listed in the National Register of Historic Sites.

### 8.27 Natural Features

Prohibit the destruction or significant alteration of special natural features through implementation of Landform Policies and Vegetative Form Policies of the LCP.

## **SCENIC ROADS AND SCENIC CORRIDORS**

### 8.28 Definition of Scenic Corridors

Define scenic corridors as the visual boundaries of the landscape abutting a scenic highway and which contain outstanding views, flora, and geology, and other unique natural or manmade attributes and historical and cultural resources affording pleasure and instruction to the highway traveler.

### 8.29 Designation of Officially Adopted State Scenic Roads and Corridors

Recognize officially adopted State Scenic Roads and Corridors as shown on the Scenic Roads and Corridors Map for the Coastal Zone. These are: Coast Highway south of Half Moon Bay city limits (State Route 1) and Skyline Boulevard (State Route 35).

### 8.30 Designation of County Scenic Roads and Corridors

- a. Expand existing County Scenic Corridors to include the visual limits of the landscape abutting the scenic road.

- b. Designate County Scenic Roads and Corridors as shown on the Scenic Roads and Corridors Map for the Coastal Zone. These are: Coast Highway north of Half Moon Bay city limits (State Route 1), Half Moon Bay Road (State Route 92), La Honda Road (State Route 84), Higgins-Purisima Road, Tunitas Creek Road, Pescadero Road, Stage Road, Cloverdale Road, and Gazos Creek Road (Coast Highway to Cloverdale Road).

#### 8.31 Regulation of Scenic Corridors in Rural Areas

- a. Apply the policies of the Scenic Road Element of the County General Plan.
- b. Apply Section 6325.1 (Primary Scenic Resources Areas Criteria) of the Resource Management (RM) Zoning District as specific regulations protecting scenic corridors in the Coastal Zone.
- c. Apply the Rural Design Policies of the LCP.
- d. Apply the Policies for Landforms and Vegetative Forms of the LCP.
- e. Require a minimum setback of 100 feet from the right-of-way line, and greater where possible; however, permit a 50-foot setback when sufficient screening is provided to shield the structure from public view.
- f. Continue applying special regulations for the Skyline Boulevard and Cabrillo Highway State Scenic Corridors.
- g. Enforce specific regulations of the Timber Harvest Ordinance which prohibits the removal of more than 50% of timber volume in scenic corridors.

#### 8.32 Regulation of Scenic Corridors in Urban Areas

- a. Apply the regulations of the Design Review (DR) Zoning Ordinance.
- b. Apply the design criteria of the Community Design Manual.
- c. Apply specific design guidelines for Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton-by-the-Sea, Miramar, San Gregorio, and Pescadero as set forth in Urban Design Policies of the LCP.

#### 8.33 Exemptions

Exempt from Planning Commission architectural and site review agricultural related development (as defined in the Categorical Exclusion for Agriculturally Related Development (E-81-1)), and all buildings and structures which would not be visible from the roadway due to localized terrain and vegetative cover.

### 8.34 Uses Allowed in Designated Historic Structures and Historic Districts

- a. In urban and rural areas, allow the following uses subject to a use permit: (1) single-family residential, (2) multiple-family residential, (3) schools, public and private, (4) libraries, (5) community centers, (6) conference centers, (7) clubs, public and private, (8) professional offices, (9) art galleries, (10) art studios, (11) museums, (12) shops and boutiques, (13) book stores, (14) country inns and hotels, (15) restaurants and cafes, and (16) bars.
- b. Use must be consistent with the resource protection policies of the San Mateo County Local Coastal Program.
- c. In rural areas, water use for the permitted use shall not exceed that provided for under “priority uses” in Policy 1.8(c) of the San Mateo County Local Coastal Program. Priority uses are allocated a maximum daily water use of 615 gallons per density credit.
- d. In rural areas, density of use shall not exceed that permitted under Policy 1.8(b) of the San Mateo County Local Coastal Program.

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