



County of Monterey Planning Commission

Item No.3

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Agenda Item No. 3

March 27, 2024

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REF210024 - BIG SUR COAST LAND USE PLAN UPDATE

- a. Conduct a continued public workshop to review and receive public input regarding the Ad Hoc Committee's proposed updates to the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan; and
- b. Provide direction to staff.

Project Location: Big Sur Coastal Planning Area

Proposed CEQA action: A planning workshop is statutorily exempt per California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) 15262.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission:

- a. Conduct a continued public workshop to review and receive public input regarding the Ad Hoc Committee's proposed updates to the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan; and
- b. Provide direction to staff.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Planning File Number: REF210024

Project Location: Big Sur Coastal Planning Area

Plan Area: Big Sur Coastal Planning Area

SUMMARY:

Staff presented the first public workshop of the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan (BSLUP) update at the Planning Commission on December 13, 2023 (staff report and exhibits available at this link: <https://monterey.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6443930&GUID=495161EC-729C-48A0-B11D-F4271A2F1593&Options=&Search=>).

Staff presented the continued public workshop at the Planning Commission on February 14, 2024 (staff report and exhibits available at this link:

<https://monterey.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6509796&GUID=3451F133-F133-4E1C-9026-E83FB01406CE&Options=&Search=>).

This continued workshop will focus on providing a brief overview of the final key topic area (Special Events and Aircraft) and to receive public and Commission input. This workshop will also continue and expand the discussion on proposed updates to the BSLUP on the following matters:

- a) Rural Community Center land use designation;
- b) Possible expanded Rural Community Center land use designation areas;
- c) Commercial Facilities Outside a Rural Community Center land use designation; and
- d) Draft Ordinance amending Title 20 to create a Rural Community Center Zoning District.

This workshop will be limited to approximately two hours. Based on the outcome of this workshop, staff will recommend a next step for the Planning Commission's consideration.

DISCUSSION

Staff presented at two public workshops of the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan (BSLUP) update at the Planning Commission on December 13, 2023, and February 14, 2024. Staff received public and Commissioner input on five of the six key topic areas, which were:

- 1) General comments on the BSLUP updates;
- 2) Highway 1 Capacity;
- 3) Wildfire;
- 4) Employee housing;
- 5) Visitor serving and commercial uses.

Staff will begin this March 27, 2024, continued workshop presentation with a brief review of Special Events and Aircraft (the sixth key topic area) before providing a brief review of the Rural Community Center (RCC) and the Commercial Facilities Outside a Rural Community Center (CFORCC) land use category. As a part of the RCC and CFORCC land use categories discussion, staff will review the existing land use categories and zoning in the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area (**Exhibit D**). The Ad Hoc Committee will present a draft of the Title 20 ordinance to add a Rural Community Center Zoning District (**Exhibit A**) and discuss how comments and input from members of the public and Commissioners will be incorporated into subsequent drafts of the BSLUP.

Special Events and Aircraft

The BSLUP updates note that actions or events that disturb the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area's rural and wild nature should be discouraged. The update specifically adds language to prohibit the takeoff and landing of drones (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) and helicopters, with exceptions for emergency circumstances. The takeoff and landing of helicopters and drones create significant noise impacts and can disrupt wildlife and the peace and tranquility of the Big Sur community. Language to regulate special events was added to recognize the disruptive nature that special events in the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area can have on the visiting public and the Big Sur community. This addition outlines clear considerations for allowing special events of an appropriate scale and how special event considerations differ in the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area's RCC and CFORCC versus non-RCC and non-CFORCC land use categories.

Distinction Between Land Use Designation and Zoning

Staff would like to review the distinction between land use designation and zoning. This distinction is important, particularly in the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area where the Rural Community Center land use designation category was created, but parcels with the Rural Community Center land use designation category currently have various zoning districts including Visitor Serving Commercial (VSC (CZ)), Coastal General Commercial (CGC (CZ)), Public/Quasi-Public (PQP (CZ)), and Watershed and Scenic Conservation (WSC (CZ)). This creates confusion as some uses allowed by the Rural Community Center land use designation category are not allowed in some of the aforementioned zoning districts.

The difference between land use and zoning is summarized here briefly. Land use outlines and details the proposed general distribution and location of various types of uses within a specific area. For example, land use designation addresses questions such as where residential development and industrial development should occur within a jurisdiction. Land use designates the general locations and intensity of development and is intended to serve as the community's vision of development. There is no requirement that there is a one-to-one relationship between the land use designation and zoning, even though in Monterey County, there often is a one-to-one relationship. (See reference: State of California. Governor's Office of Planning and Research. (2023). Chapter 4 Required Elements).

Zoning is intended to implement the land use designation and sets design and development requirements, such as parking requirements, lot coverage, structure height, and setbacks. Zoning laws are adopted pursuant to Article XI, section 7 of the California Constitution. Zoning defines the specific allowable uses of a parcel and the requirements and limitations to development on a specific parcel. Zoning regulations also create the approval process, determine the appropriate hearing authority, and establish standards for project review, such as what uses are allowed and conditionally allowed.

a) Rural Community Center Land Use Designation (RCC)

The 1986 BSLUP created "a special land use classification, called Rural Community Center," which was intended to allow "these areas [RCC] to continue to provide a spectrum of functions for both the visiting public and for residents of the adjoining rural areas." (See reference: Exhibit B, Section 5.3.2, page 89, paragraph 1) This land use classification [category] was designated in portions of Big Sur Valley, Pacific Valley, Lucia, and Gorda. The 1986 BSLUP further noted that "in general any use allowed in any zone is appropriate for Rural Community Centers". (See reference: Exhibit B, Section 5.3.2, page 89, paragraph 2).

Importantly, the 1986 BSLUP acknowledged the significant resource constraints that are present in the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area and limited "the maximum inn unit [Table 1 category: Inns, RV Campgrounds] density in the Rural Community Centers shall be one unit per acre, with a minimum parcel size of ten acres". The 1986 BSLUP set limitations on the number of visitor accommodation units to a maximum of 30 units per site. (See reference: Exhibit B, Section 5.4.2.9, page 93, paragraph 2). This constraint is important as it serves as a means to limit the impacts of more intensive visitor accommodations in the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area and to minimize the number of units that can be developed at one site. This constraint also serves to maintain the rural and unspoiled nature in the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area.

Yet, the 1986 BSLUP did not have clear text for the RCC land use category even though the corresponding land use maps outline it. Therefore, the Ad Hoc Committee's updates to the BSLUP state that the RCC is the eighth land use category and provide a clear textual description of its provisions. (See reference: Exhibit B, Section 5.3.1.8, page 86-87).

b) Rural Community Center Land Use Category (RCC) Possible Expansion

The Ad Hoc Committee also wants to acknowledge that their work did not include proposing any changes to the existing mapped land use categories in the 1986 BSLUP. The Ad Hoc Committee wanted to release the existing 1986 BSLUP maps with the existing land use designations but also outline possible areas where it may be reasonable to expand the Rural

Community Center land use designation. The Ad Hoc Committee carefully chose the possible expansion area boundaries to recognize the historical uses occurring on the parcels and locations where employee or affordable housing could be expanded to house the Big Sur community and workforce safely and equitably. The maps of possible expansion of the Rural Community Center land use category can be found in **Exhibit F**.

The Ad Hoc Committee and staff are seeking community and Commissioner input on the draft possible expansion of the Rural Community Center land use category.

c) Commercial Facilities Outside a Rural Community Center (CFORCC)

The 1986 BSLUP and the associated land use maps clearly delineated the RCC but also included, but did not textually describe, a ninth land use category, Commercial Facilities Outside a Rural Community Center (CFORCC). This land use category is mentioned in the 1986 BSLUP as “Several commercial uses including the Rocky Point Restaurant, Big Sur Inn, and Coast Gallery, are currently found outside the Rural Community Centers designated on the land use map and these are considered conforming uses under the plan.” (See reference: Exhibit B, Section 3.2.5.A, page 17; and Section 5.4.3.E.1, page 100-101). Westmere, a former historic lodge that burned down, which was a commercial use outside of the RCCs, is also discussed at various points in the text as being allowed to resume its historic use, with certain caveats. (See reference: Exhibit B, Section 3.2.5.A, page 17; Section 5.3.1.9, page 87; Section 5.3.3, page 91, paragraph 1; Section 5.4.2.9, page 93, paragraph 1; and Section 5.4.3.E.2, page 101). The 1986 BSLUP- associated maps, specifically Figure 1 Proposed Land Use Rural Community Centers Commercial Facilities Outside Rural Community Centers - Detail F, outline the Commercial Facilities Outside Rural Community Center. (See reference: Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan Proposed Land Use Detail F (<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showpublisheddocument/38009/636371081308570000>)).

The Ad Hoc Committee added clarity that CFORCCs are the ninth land use category separate from the RCC land use category. These additions state that the existing uses are allowable at these locations and that uses of a similar character and intensity are considered conforming uses. But importantly, highway-orientated commercial structures are not allowed outside of the RCC to ensure that the rural, unspoiled, and wild nature of the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area is protected, which is one of the important distinctions between RCCs and CFORCCs.

d) Rural Community Center Zoning District

The original 1986 BSLUP envisioned that as a part of the implementation of the BSLUP, there would be the corresponding adoption of new zoning districts. (See reference: Exhibit B, Section 7.2.1.A, page 128, paragraph 3). One of the suggested zoning districts is the Rural Community Center Zoning District (RCC (CZ)). This zoning district was never implemented. The Ad Hoc Committee proposes that for all areas with a land use designation of RCC, a corresponding RCC (CZ) zoning district would provide additional clarity on the allowed and conditionally allowed uses in the Rural Community Centers as outlined in the original 1986 BSLUP.

Currently, the majority of areas in the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area that have a RCC land use

designation have a corresponding zoning district of Visitor Serving Commercial (VSC (CZ)). (See reference: Chapter 20.22 of the Monterey County Code). The Big Sur Lodge at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park has an RCC land use designation but has a corresponding zoning district of Public/Quasi-Public (PQP (CZ)). (See reference: Chapter 20.40 of the Monterey County Code) Finally, a few parcels in the center of Big Sur Valley, including the United States Post Office, the Big Sur Center, Loma Vista Gardens, and Big Sur Bakery, have an RCC land use designation but have a corresponding zoning district of Coastal General Commercial (CGC (CZ)). (See reference: Chapter 20.18 of the Monterey County Code).

When the Ad Hoc Committee was drafting the Title 20 ordinance to implement the Rural Community Center zoning district, the intent was to ensure that the RCC (CZ) would be relatively similar to the existing VSC (CZ) zoning district but, importantly, include commercial uses for the visiting public and residents of the Big Sur community. In addition, to acknowledge the significant housing challenges that the Big Sur community faces regarding housing its residents and workforce, this zoning district would increase opportunities to provide affordable and employee housing. The draft of Title 20 ordinance to implement the Rural Community Center zoning district can be found in **Exhibit A**. Staff also provided a crosswalk document (**Exhibit C**) that clearly shows what Chapter in Title 20 the language was pulled from.

The Ad Hoc Committee and staff are seeking comments and input from the community and Commissioners on the Preliminary Draft Title 20 ordinance that implements the Rural Community Center Zoning District (RCC (CZ)) in Monterey County Code.

Incorporation of Public and Commissioner Comments

The Ad Hoc Committee has met several times since the February 14, 2024, Planning Commission Workshop to discuss how to appropriately incorporate the public and Commissioner comments and input received. The Ad Hoc Committee wanted to ensure that it carefully reviewed and considered all feedback that had been received and acknowledged the importance of continued public comments and input as the BSLUP updates move forward. While the current workshop will not incorporate any edits or modifications to the BSLUP, the Ad Hoc Committee at subsequent workshops will review and consider public and commissioner comments and input and release a revised BSLUP document with edits and updates.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Housing and Community Development Department staff are working in collaboration with the Big Sur Land Use Plan Ad Hoc Committee of the Planning Commission to update the BSLUP and with the Office of County Counsel to review the proposed updates.

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The following attachments are on file with the HCD:

Exhibit A - Draft of Title 20 Ordinance - Rural Community Center Zoning District

- Exhibit B - Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan with Track Changes Version 11.27.2023
- Exhibit C - Crosswalk between Rural Community Center Zoning District and Existing Title 20 Zoning Districts
- Exhibit D - 1986 Big Sur Land Use & Zoning Maps for Rural Community Centers (North Big Sur Valley, South Big Sur Valley, Lucia, Pacific Valley, and Gorda)
- Exhibit E - Public Comment Letters Received Since December 13, 2023
- Exhibit F - 1986 Big Sur Land Use Maps for Rural Community Centers (North Big Sur Valley and South Big Sur Valley) Possible Expansion of Rural Community Center

Cc: Big Sur & South Coast LUACs; Big Sur Byways Organization; Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Committee; Monterey County Water Resources Agency; California Coastal Commission; Breylen Ammen, California Coastal Commission; Katie Butler, California Coastal Commission; Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; California Coastal Conservancy; California State Parks; United States Forest Service Los Padres National Forest; Big Sur Chamber of Commerce; California Department of Fish and Wildlife; Big Sur Land Trust; Caltrans; Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District; Keep Big Sur Wild; REF210024 Public Distribution List.