



County of Monterey

Item No.1

Zoning Administrator

Legistar File Number: ZA 26-015

February 26, 2026

Introduced: 2/18/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: Zoning Administrator

PLN240024 - S T C RENEWALS AND SERVICES LTD Public hearing to consider the after-the-fact installation of a 5,000-gallon water tank for the purposes of providing emergency service to fire protection district within 100-feet of an environmentally sensitive habitat area.

Project Location: as adjacent to 37013 Palo Colorado Canyon Road, Carmel, Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan, Coastal Zone

Proposed CEQA Action: Find the project Categorical Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15301, and there are no exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Zoning Administrator adopt a resolution:

1. Finding the project exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, existing structures, and there are no exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2; and
2. Approve a Combined Development Permit consisting of:
 1. Coastal Administrative Permit and Design Approval to allow the after-the-fact installation of a 5,000-gallon water tank for the purpose of providing emergency service to fire protection district; and
 2. Coastal Development Permit to allow development within 100 feet of an environmentally sensitive habitat.

A draft resolution, including findings and evidence, is attached for consideration (**Exhibit B**).

Staff recommends approval subject to 2 conditions.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Project Owner: S T C Renewals and Services Ltd

APN: 418-031-019-000

Zoning: Rural Density Residential, 40 acres per unit, Design Control Overlay (Coastal Zone)
[RDR/40-D (CZ)]

Parcel Size: 1.48 acres (64,468.8 sq. ft.)

Flagged and Staked: No

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The property is located as adjacent to 37013 Palo Colorado Canyon Road, Carmel, and is subject to the policies of the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan. The project involves an after-the-fact installation of a 5,000-gallon water tank in a pre-existing stonewall enclosure on a concrete pad. The water tank is for the exclusive use of the Mid-Coast Fire Brigade for fire suppression. The site is a vacant parcel located within 100 feet of an environmentally sensitive habitat (ESHA), so a Coastal Development Permit is required to allow construction within 100 feet of ESHA. This project was previously

scheduled for the January 29, 2026, Zoning Administrator Hearing. However, the hearing was continued to allow staff further time to provide findings and evidence.

Based on staff's analysis, the proposed project is consistent with applicable goals and policies in the 1982 Monterey County General Plan (General Plan), policies in the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan (BSC LUP), regulations and development standards contained in the Monterey County Coastal Implementation Plan, Part 3 (CIP) and Title 20 Zoning Ordinance (Title 20).

Cultural Resources:

The Monterey County Geographic Informational System (GIS) identifies the project site is located within an area of high sensitivity for cultural resources. As there was no ground disturbance or site alteration caused by the installation of the water storage tank, an Archaeological Report Waiver application was submitted.

Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA):

The location of the water storage tank is approximately 45 feet from Palo Colorado Creek. BSC LUP identifies vegetation within 150 feet of a riparian corridor as environmentally sensitive habitat area. The Biological Report (LIB250351) identified no special status species on or near the project area. The water storage tank was installed within an existing stonewall enclosure upon a concrete pad. There was no ground disturbance and no site alteration done for the tank installation. The report concluded that there were no significant impacts to native vegetation.

Design Review:

Pursuant to MCC Chapter 20.44, the proposed project site and surrounding area are designated as a Design Control Zoning District ("D" zoning overlay), which regulates the location, size, configuration, materials, and colors of structures and fences to assure the protection of the public viewshed and neighborhood character. The water storage tank is similar in every aspect to other water storage tanks located on parcels adjacent to Palo Colorado Canyon Road. It is forest green, and cylindrical in shape with a rounded top.

The property is not located in an area where the Local Coastal Program requires visual public access (Chapter 3.2, Scenic Resources, Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan). The property is located east, or landward, of Highway 1. The project site is not visible from the coast or a public viewing area. The proposed development as conditioned is consistent with Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan Policy 3.2.4 and will not detract from the natural beauty of the canyon or redwood forestation. The project proposal uses the existing bridge and entryway connecting to Palo Colorado Canyon Road and an existing stonewall enclosure with concrete pad for the foundation of the water storage tank. The proposed colors and materials will blend with the surrounding environment. As proposed, the project would not result in any visual impacts, and the project is consistent with the applicable visual resource and public access policies of the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan.

Development Standards:

The property is zoned for rural density residential use, which allows development of water system facilities which include water storage tanks as principally allowed uses subject to the granting of a Coastal Administrative Permit pursuant to MCC Section 20.16.040.J. The project proposal is for the

after-the-fact installation of a 5,000-gallon water storage tank in an existing stonewall enclosure with concrete pad. The project meets development standards pertaining to lot coverage, height, and the front, rear and side setbacks. The project uses the existing stonewall enclosure and concrete pad. Using the existing enclosure requires no site disturbance or grading, thereby better meeting the policies and goals of the Big Sur Implementation Plan and other Big Sur goals and policies by minimizing development impacts to the site.

LUAC:

The project was referred to the Big Sur Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) for review (**Exhibit D**). The LUAC reviewed the project at a duly noticed public meeting on February 10, 2026, at which all persons had the opportunity to be heard. The LUAC recommended putting a sign on the tank designating it clearly as for “fire suppression only.” The LUAC voted 5 - 0 (5 ayes) to support the project with the recommendation for the sign.

CEQA:

The project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines, “Existing Facilities.” This project qualifies for a Class 1 exemption because it includes the permitting of an existing structure and will not result in any adverse impacts to the surrounding environmental resources as defined in the CEQA Guidelines. All of the necessary reports have been obtained and have concluded that it is unlikely the project would impact archaeological resources, forest resources or visual impacts. There are no exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2. The project does not involve a designated historical resource. The project does not involve the removal of trees or major vegetation. Therefore, the proposed development is consistent with the parameters of this Class 1 exemption. There are no exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2. No evidence of significant adverse environmental effects was identified during staff review of the development application. There is no cumulative impact without any prior successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time. There is no significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The site is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code to be considered a hazardous waste site. No known historical resources are found in the geotechnical or archaeological reports, which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. The project site is not within an officially designated highway area, as a state scenic highway.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The following County agencies or departments reviewed this project:

- HCD-Engineering Services
- HCD-Environmental Services
- Environmental Health Bureau
- Mid Coast Fire Brigade
- California Coastal Commission

Prepared by: Benjamin Moulton, Assistant Planner

Reviewed and Approved by: Jacquelyn M. Nickerson, Principal Planner

The following attachments are on file with HCD:

Exhibit A - Project Data Sheet

Exhibit B - Draft Resolution, including:

- Site Plan, Floor Plans, Elevations & Colors and Materials

- Recommended Conditions of Approval

Exhibit C - Biological Report

Exhibit D - Big Sur Coast LUAC Minutes (February 10, 2026)

Exhibit E - Vicinity Map

cc: Front Counter Copy; California Coastal Commission; Mid-Coast Fire Brigade;
HCD-Environmental Services; HCD-Engineering Services; Environmental Health Bureau;
Benjamin Moulton, Planner; Jacquelyn M. Nickerson, Principal Planner; S T C RENEWALS AND
SERVICES LTD, Property Owner; Brittney Schloss, Agent; Big Sur Coast LUAC; The Open
Monterey Project; LandWatch (Executive Director); Planning File PLN240024