

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Staff Report for 2025 General Ordinance Amendment Package

Hearing Date: December 3, 2025

Staff Report Date: November 25, 2025

Case Nos.: 25ORD-00009 and 00010

Environmental Document: California
Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Exempt

LUDC: Section 15061(b)(3)

CZO: Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15265

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1.0 REQUEST

Hearing on the request of the County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development Department (P&D) for the County Planning Commission (CPC) to consider the following:

1. Adopt an ordinance (Case No. 25ORD-00009) to amend the Santa Barbara County Land Use and Development Code (LUDC), of Chapter 35, Zoning, of the County Code, as set forth in Attachment C-1.
2. Determine that the ordinance (Case No. 25ORD-00009) is exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA.
3. Adopt an ordinance (Case No. 25ORD-00010) to amend the Santa Barbara County Coastal Zoning Ordinance (CZO), Article II, of Chapter 35, Zoning, of the County Code, as set forth in Attachment D-1.
4. Determine that the ordinance (Case No. 25ORD-00010) is exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15265 of the State Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA.

The proposed amendments consist of a general package of various amendments to the CZO and LUDC to amend existing text provisions and regulations, which are discussed more in detail below.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Case No. 25ORD-00009. Follow the procedures outlined below and recommend that the Board approve the LUDC amendments (Case No. 25ORD-00009) based on the ability to make the required findings. The CPC's motion should include the following:

1. Make the required findings for approval (Attachment A), including CEQA findings, and recommend that the Board make the findings for approval of the proposed amendments (Attachment C-1);

2. Recommend that the Board determine that ordinance Case No. 25ORD-00009 is exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA (Attachment B); and
3. Adopt the resolution (Attachment C) recommending that the Board adopt the ordinance to amend the LUDC (Case No. 25ORD-00009), of Chapter 35, Zoning, of the Santa Barbara County Code (Attachment C-1).

2.2 Case No. 25ORD-00010. Follow the procedures outlined below and recommend that the Board approve the CZO amendment (Case No. 25ORD-00010) based on the ability to make the required findings. The CPC's motion should include the following:

1. Make the required findings for approval (Attachment A), including CEQA findings, and recommend that the Board make the findings for approval of the proposed amendment (Attachment D-1);
2. Recommend that the Board determine that ordinance Case No. 25ORD-00010 is exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15265 of the State Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA (Attachment B); and
3. Adopt the resolution (Attachment D) recommending that the Board adopt the ordinance to amend the CZO (Case No. 25ORD-00010), of Chapter 35, Zoning, of the Santa Barbara County Code (Attachment D-1).

Please refer the matter to staff if the CPC takes other than the recommended actions for the development of appropriate materials.

3.0 JURISDICTION

3.1 Case No. 25ORD-00009. The CPC is considering these amendments based on Sections 65854 to 65857, inclusive, of the California Government Code and Chapter 35.104 of the LUDC, which require that the CPC, as the designated planning agency for the unincorporated area of the County located outside of the Montecito Community Plan area, review and consider proposed amendments to the LUDC, and provide a recommendation to the Board.

3.2 Case No. 25ORD-00010. The CPC is considering the proposed Article II amendment pursuant to CZO Section 35-180.5. The CZO requires that the CPC, as the designated planning agency for the unincorporated area of the county located outside of the Montecito Community Plan Area, review and consider proposed amendments to Article II affecting the Coastal Zone, including the Montecito Community Plan Area, and provide recommendations to the Board.

4.0 ISSUE SUMMARY

The Planning and Development Department is committed to keeping the zoning ordinances accurate and up-to-date by routinely processing minor amendments that address emerging issues, and correct, simplify, and clarify existing language. This ensures that regulations keep pace with current trends, policies, and State law, and to improve the functioning of our zoning codes. The amendments to the CZO and LUDC include the following:

- Deleting and repealing unnecessary provisions
- Clarifying when certain agricultural enterprise use structures may be exempt from Development Plans
- Clarifying or simplifying existing procedures, requirements, and definitions
- Implementing revisions in State law pertaining to Density Bonus provisions
- Correcting minor errors and omissions

The complete text of the ordinance amendments are included in Attachments C-1 (LUDC) and D-1 (CZO). Deleted text is shown in strikethrough and new text is shown underlined.

5.0 PROJECT INFORMATION

5.1 Agricultural Enterprise Uses

The proposed amendments include minor clarifications to the inland Agricultural Enterprise Ordinance adopted by the Board on December 12, 2024. These changes clarify when certain agricultural enterprise use structures allowed with a Zoning Clearance or Land Use Permit may be exempt from Development Plans and include other necessary clean up revisions, as follows:

- Clarify under what limited instances the gross floor area of structures that are permitted as an Agricultural Enterprise Use count towards the square footage threshold for Development Plans in Section 35.21.030.C.
- Delete an inconsistent development standard regarding planted acreage for small-scale agricultural processing facilities.
- Remove footnote from Table 4-2 in Subsection 35.42.035.D.2.c and Table 4-3 in Subsection 35.42.035.D.6.c.
- Revise existing definitions of “Tent Cabin” and “Yurt”.

5.2 Art, Garden, and Architecture Tours (Coastal Zone Only)

On May 6, 2025, the Board adopted an ordinance (Ord. No. 5248) to facilitate community events such as artist, garden, and architecture tours within the unincorporated Inland Area of the County. Staff propose to incorporate similar provisions to the Coastal Zone. These community events provide an important resource and it has long been an objective of the County to update its zoning codes to accommodate such events.

The proposed amendments would allow art tours and other similar periodic events (e.g., garden and architecture tours) by updating the Temporary Use section of the CZO (Section 35-137, Exempt Temporary Uses), as follows:

- Create a new category of temporary events, exempt from permit requirements, subject to specific standards;
- Limited to up to four times per year, no longer than three days per event;
- Open to the general public, with up to 300 attendees per event per day;
- Any reception shall be limited to non-residential zones; and
- Lots operating with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) shall not conduct Tours and associated receptions or gatherings, unless expressly permitted by the approved CUP.

5.3 Other Minor Ordinance Amendments

The proposed ordinances also include additional minor amendments to correct and clarify existing provisions in the LUDC and the CZO for the CPC's consideration and recommendation to the Board and are discussed in more detail below. The complete text of the minor ordinance amendments are included in Attachment C-1 (LUDC) and Attachment D-1 (CZO). Deleted text is shown in strikethrough and new text is shown underlined.

5.3.1 LUDC Amendments

- Section 35.30.150.C: Establish a single standard for corner lot front setbacks, regardless of lot width.
- Chapter 35.432: Update existing provisions to align with recent changes to State Density Bonus Law.
- Section 35.33.060: Correct typo in "Street, Primary" definition.
- Section 35.42.015.E.1: Clarify amount and type of Accessory Dwelling Units or Junior Accessory Dwelling Units that may be permitted per lot.
- Section 35.42.020.B.6: Clarify gross floor area for accessory structures containing one or more accessory uses on lots of one acre or less.
- Section 35.42.150: Change floor area calculations for guest houses, artist studios, and cabañas from net to gross square foot for greater consistency.
- Section 35.42.260.F.16.E: Add new subsection e to clarify that temporary uses associated with art, garden, and architecture tours shall not be conducted on a lot operating under a permitted Conditional Use Permit unless expressly allowed by that permit.
- Sections 35.44.010.C and D: Correct subsection typos for commercial telecommunication facilities.
- Section 35.76.050.E: Correct subsection typo.
- Section 35.89.050.C: Revise to add civil code section.

- Section 35.110.020. Revise existing definition of “Lot, Interior”.

5.3.2 CZO Amendments

- Section 35-51B, Exemptions from Planning Permit Requirements: Correct an existing subsection reference.
- Section 35-57D, Initial Application Review: Add new subsection to clarify existing practices and establish consistency with regulations in the LUDC and MLUDC.
- Section 35-58, Definitions: (1) Add new definitions for *Flood Control* for consistency with the Gaviota Coast Plan Overlay, and (2) revise *Lot*, *Interior* and *Major Public Works Project and Major Energy Facility* definitions.
- Section 35-68.7, Setbacks for Buildings and Structures: Clarify total front setback limit for hothouses, greenhouses, other plant protections, or related structures in the AG-I – Agriculture I zone.
- Section 35-119, Accessory Structures: Clarify gross floor area for accessory structures containing one or more accessory uses on lots of one acre or less.
- Section 35-120, Guest House, Artist Studio, or Pool House/ Cabaña: Clarify size limits are calculated in gross floor area, not net floor area for consistency.
- Section 35-126.2, Corner Lots Abutting Two or More Streets: Remove front setback width requirements for corner lots, establishing a single standard for corner lots, regardless of lot width.
- Section 35-142.5, Accessory dwelling units located within residential or mixed-use zones: Specify maximum number of ADUs allowed per lot in different configurations.
- Section 35-144C (Article II): Update existing provisions to align with recent changes to State Density Bonus Law.
- Section 35-144.M.5, Special Notice Requirements: Update noticing requirements for mobilehome park conversions consistent with Civil Code Section 798.56(g).
- Section 35-191.5, Floor Area Limit: Clarify Summerland Floor Area Ratio calculations consistent with Summerland Architectural Guidelines.

6.0 PROJECT ANALYSIS

6.1 Environmental Review

- 6.1.1 Case No. 25ORD-00009.** The proposed amendments to the LUDC are recommended to be determined to be exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA. Consistent with Section 15061(b)(3), there is no possibility that the proposed minor ordinance amendments will have a significant effect on the environment. As explained further in Attachment B, no significant environmental impacts would occur as a result of these ordinance amendments.
- 6.1.2 Case No. 25ORD-00010.** The proposed amendments to the CZO are recommended to be determined to be exempt from environmental review pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15265 of the State Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15265 statutorily exempts local government activities involving the preparation and adoption of local coastal program amendments from environmental review. Section 15061(b)(3) states “[w]here it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.” As explained further in Attachment B, no significant environmental impacts would occur as a result of these ordinance amendments.

Please see the Notice of Exemption (Attachment B) for additional information.

6.2 Policy and Ordinance Consistency

As discussed in the Findings for Approval (Attachment A), the proposed ordinance amendments do not alter the purpose and intent of any policies or development standards of the Comprehensive Plan, including the Coastal Land Use Plan, and the adoption of the proposed ordinance amendments will not result in any inconsistencies with the adopted policies and development standards.

The proposed State Density Bonus Law provision amendment is consistent with Program 13 of the *2023-2031 Housing Element Update*, which directs the County to develop an ordinance that updates County State Density Bonus Law provisions to comply with recent changes to State law by the end of 2025.

In addition, modifications to the Temporary Use sections of the CZO to facilitate community tours and streamline and clarify the process and standards regulating these events, is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, all community plans and areas, and the Coastal Land Use Plan. The amendments establish a new temporary use category that is similar in nature to other existing temporary uses and modify permit requirements consistent with other provisions of the zoning code. Any tour events conducted in accordance with the new allowance would be temporary in nature and not involve any development or activities that would have the potential to be inconsistent with policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including applicable Community Plans and

Coastal Land Use Plan.

The other minor amendments serve to clarify or simplify existing regulations and ensure greater consistency across the zoning ordinances where possible. No development would be approved as part of the minor ordinance amendments. In order for a land use entitlement to be approved based on these proposed amendments, the decision-maker still must determine that the project is consistent with the policies and development standards of the Comprehensive Plan, including the community plans, and the Coastal Land Use Plan, if applicable. Therefore, these amendments are consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, including community plans, and the Coastal Land Use Plan.

7.0 Montecito Planning Commission (MPC)

Montecito Planning Commission Recommendation

On November 19, 2025, the MPC voted 3-2 to recommend the Board adopt the MLUDC amendments and an ordinance to repeal the Montecito Growth Management Ordinance and recommended to the CPC to recommend that the Board adopt the CZO amendments as revised during the hearing to include a minor staff edit to Section 35-68.7.4, Setbacks for Buildings and Structures for clarification.

8.0 APPEALS PROCEDURE

Ordinance amendments recommended for approval or denial are legislative acts that are automatically forwarded to the Board for final action. Therefore, the ordinance amendments are not subject to appeal.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Findings for Approval
- B. CEQA Notice of Exemption
- C. LUDC Resolution and Amendment (Case No. 25ORD-00009)
 - C-1. LUDC Amendments with Changes Shown
- D. CZO Resolution and Amendment (Case No. 25ORD-00010)
 - D-1. CZO Amendments with Changes Shown