

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY / MONTECITO PLANNING COMMISSION

Staff Report

Joint Planning Commission Workshop on the Santa Barbara County Coastal Resiliency Project

Workshop Date: December 20, 2017

Staff Report Date: December 12, 2017

Case Nos.: 17GPA-00000-00004,
17ORD-00000-00015

Environmental Document: Notice of
Exemption, CEQA Guidelines Sections
15060(c)(3) and 15378(b)(2)

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1.0 REQUEST

Hearing on the request of the Planning and Development Department (P&D) that the County and Montecito Planning Commissions (1) receive a staff briefing regarding the project history and current status of the Coastal Resiliency Project, and (2) provide initial comments and direction regarding potential amendments to the Coastal Land Use Plan and Coastal Zoning Ordinance [Local Coastal Program (LCP)] that would address sea level rise as a coastal hazard to be considered in future permitting and planning processes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION AND PROCEDURES

Staff recommends that the County and Montecito Planning Commissions:

1. Receive a staff briefing on the Coastal Resiliency Project, including the “Sea Level Rise and Coastal Hazards Vulnerability Assessment” and draft LCP policies.
2. Provide initial comments and direction to staff regarding potential amendments to the LCP.
3. Direct staff to return to the Montecito Planning Commission with proposed LCP amendments for the Montecito Planning Commission’s consideration and recommendation to the County Planning Commission.
4. Direct staff to return to the County Planning Commission with proposed LCP amendments for the County Planning Commission’s consideration and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.
5. Determine that the briefing, comments, and direction to staff do not constitute a project and are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(3) and 15378(b)(2), included as Attachment A.

3.0 JURISDICTION

3.1 County Planning Commission

This workshop is not required by State law. The ordinance amendments will be considered by the County Planning Commission based upon provisions of Government Code Section 65855 and the process requirements for LCP amendments provided in the County Coastal Zoning Ordinance Sections 35-57C and 35-180.5. The Government Code and the County Coastal Zoning Ordinance require that the County Planning Commission review and consider proposed ordinance amendments and provide a written recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. The State Coastal Commission must review and make a determination regarding amendments to a certified LCP.

3.2 Montecito Planning Commission

This workshop is not required by State law. The Montecito Planning Commission will consider the ordinance amendments pursuant to Government Code Section 65855 and Section 2-25.2 of Chapter 2 of the Santa Barbara County Code. The Santa Barbara County Code states that the Montecito Planning Commission may provide a recommendation to the County Planning Commission on proposed amendments to Chapter 35 of the County Code that will affect land use solely within the Coastal Zone portion of the Montecito Community Plan Area.

4.0 ISSUE SUMMARY

As part of the Long Range Planning Division's 2016-2017 fiscal year work program, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to continue working on the Coastal Resiliency Project in accordance with the project grant agreement and scope of work. Significant project deliverables have been completed, including the "Sea Level Rise and Coastal Hazards Vulnerability Assessment" (Attachment B), and a public outreach effort that took place from August through October of 2017, as discussed in further detail below.

Staff will now be presenting those significant project deliverables to the Commissions, and is also seeking initial comments and direction from the Commissioners regarding the draft LCP amendments (Attachment C). The draft LCP amendments are based upon the work performed under the Coastal Resiliency Project as well as State of California research and policy guidance, Coastal Commission guidance, and public feedback.

5.0 BACKGROUND

The County of Santa Barbara's Coastal Resiliency Project is a grant-funded effort to evaluate the impacts of sea level rise and resulting coastal hazards along the County's 110-mile long coastline, and examine potential asset vulnerabilities within the unincorporated county areas. The

overall goal of the project is to identify and plan for mitigation of potential coastal hazards from sea level rise that would otherwise impact coastal development, infrastructure, ecological resources, and other community assets. This includes creation of a policy framework that will provide predictability to Coastal Development Permit applicants.

5.1 Local Coastal Program Grant and Project Deliverables

In 2014 the County received a \$200,000 grant from the California Coastal Conservancy, and the Nature Conservancy provided a \$22,000 in-kind service match. In 2015 the County received \$183,000 from the California Coastal Commission and the Ocean Protection Council. Santa Barbara County has provided \$107,000 in matching funds for staff time and effort on both grants.

The overall grant-funded project involves four steps:

1. Modeling and mapping of coastal hazards and assets,
2. Developing a vulnerability assessment,
3. Identifying adaptation measures, and
4. Amending the County's LCP.

The project boundary spans the entire County coastal zone from the San Luis Obispo County line to the Ventura County line. The entire County coastline was modeled to view potential impacts and hazards from sea level rise. Modeling of sea level rise impacts along the south coast, not factoring existing coastal armoring into the model, was completed by fall of 2015. The modeling for the north coast and for the entire county coastline factoring in existing coastal armoring was completed in the summer of 2016.

After the coastal hazards were modeled, assets within the unincorporated areas of the County were examined for potential vulnerabilities. The resulting Vulnerability Assessment includes analysis and maps showing potentially vulnerable assets along the entire unincorporated County coastline, with and without existing coastal armoring included. Staff and consultants worked together to identify potential adaptation measures that could address some sea level rise impacts along the County coast. Such measures are briefly discussed in the Vulnerability Assessment; however, the feasibility and costs of adaptation measures have not yet been fully explored. A link to the final Vulnerability Assessment is included within Attachment B.

After the Vulnerability Assessment work was finished, staff began examining existing County policies to understand where modifications or new policies may warranted. County staff, in consultation with Coastal Commission staff, prepared draft potential new or enhanced policies, and presented the policies at public workshops and meetings for discussion and comment. The draft LCP policies have since been updated as a result of public feedback and the Coastal Commission's draft "Residential Adaptation Policy Guidance" document, and are included as Attachment C to this report.

Per the terms of the grant agreement, informal consultation has occurred with local Coastal Commission staff over the past year on potential LCP policies. The Coastal Commission's comment letters are included within Attachment E to this report.

5.2 Sea Level Rise and Coastal Hazards

Coastal hazards resulting from sea level rise include:

- Short- and long-term cliff and dune erosion
- Coastal and fluvial (creek/stream) flooding
- Wave runup
- Rising tides

Sea level rise through the end of this century was projected using the best available science when the project began, which was the National Research Council's 2012 publication of "Sea Level Rise for the Coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington." The regional information from the 2012 report was downscaled and refined for the Santa Barbara County coastline, and the resulting sea level rise projections are shown in Table 5.2-1 below.

Table 5.2-1. Sea Level Rise (SLR) Projections for Santa Barbara County (inches)

Time Period	Low SLR	Medium SLR	High SLR
By 2030	0.04	3.5	10.2
By 2060	2.8	11.8	27.2
By 2100	10.6	30.7	60.2

Source: "Sea Level Rise for the Coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington," National Research Council, 2012

Note: Based on National Research Council projections in reference to year 2000 and modified for local conditions.

The different projections for low, medium, and high sea level rise are dependent upon factors such as global carbon emissions (how much carbon is being pumped into the atmosphere globally), regional ocean and weather patterns (such as the ocean currents), and local conditions such as geologic features along the coastline.

The National Research Council projected sea level rise of up to 27 inches by the year 2060, and up to 60 inches (or 5 feet) by the end of this century. An updated study by the State of California released in April of 2017¹, as well as recent work by researchers from UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego, the U.S. Geological Survey, and California Sea Grant², led to similar projections, and also found that there will be an increase in the number and size of rainfall events and coastal storms.

¹ Griggs, G, Arvai, J, Cayan, D, DeConto, R, Fox, J, Fricker, HA, Kopp, RE, Tebaldi, C, Whiteman, EA (California Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team Working Group). Rising Seas in California: An Update on Sea-Level Rise Science. California Ocean Science Trust, April 2017.

² Myers, M. R., Cayan, D. R., Iacobellis, S. F., Melack, J. M., Beighley, R. E., Barnard, P. L., Dugan, J. E. and Page, H. M., 2017. Santa Barbara Area Coastal Ecosystem Vulnerability Assessment. CASG-17-009.

The sea level rise and coastal hazards model results are available through an online mapping portal that The Nature Conservancy hosts. The entire Santa Barbara County coastline can be viewed at <http://maps.coastalresilience.org/california/>.

5.3 Model Assumptions and Limitations

The County's sea level rise coastal hazards model was prepared at a planning-level scale. It is not fine-grained enough to use to precisely predict sea level rise impacts for specific parcels, or on specific buildings or other types of structures. The maps that resulted from the model show areas that are potentially subject to increased coastal hazards where further site-specific study may be needed to assess potential impacts.

Several assumptions were made about future coastal processes, to complete the modeling of coastal hazards. These assumptions include that existing topography would be consistent into the future, and sediment supply along the coast remains constant. All model inputs, assumptions, and other information can be found within the Technical Report included in Attachment B.

5.4 Vulnerability Assessment Methodology

The Vulnerability Assessment was prepared by mapping coastal assets and assessing whether they fell within the coastal hazard areas resulting from the sea level rise modeling. A conservative "worst case" scenario was used for the vulnerability assessment mapping. The worst-case scenario is considered to be the high sea level rise scenario in combination with a high tide, a 100-year storm event, and wave run-up at certain time intervals. The year 2010 was set as the baseline year to assess current conditions. Future time horizons (2030, 2060, and 2100) were assessed for potential vulnerabilities. Table 5.4-1 shows the eight asset sectors and the mapped assets that were analyzed for potential vulnerabilities.

Table 5.4-1. Coastal Assets Mapped for Vulnerability to Sea Level Rise

Asset Sector	Mapped Assets
Hazardous Materials & Minerals	oil and gas wells, hazardous material storage sites
Roads & Public Transportation	roads, Highway 101, railroad, bicycle lanes, bus routes
Land Use	land use types (residential, commercial, open space) and structures
Public Facilities	schools, hospitals, fire stations, police stations, etc.
Public Access & Recreation	trails, beaches, parks
Environmentally Sensitive Habitat	designated environmentally sensitive habitat areas (e.g., wetlands and riparian corridors)
Wastewater	wastewater treatment plants, pipes, and septic systems
Water Supply	pipes, control pumps and valves

As would be expected, areas of the County that are already subject to coastal erosion and flooding are expected to be increasingly impacted as sea levels rise. Beach and bluff erosion are expected to increase, and flooding is expected to extend further inland. Significant impacts to the rail corridor within the County are expected to occur, as well as impacts to coastal recreation areas. Table 5.4-2 shows the percentages of some of the asset sectors that could be impacted by sea level rise by the year 2100.

**Table 5.4-2. Percent of Sector Impacted (in Unincorporated County areas)
by Sea Level Rise, by the Year 2100**

Sector / Type	Percent of Sector Impacted by 2100
Land Use	
Residential (acres)	3.7
Commercial (acres)	4.0
Industrial (acres)	0.9
Open Lands (acres)	0.6
Transportation	
Roads (miles)	1.5
Railroad (miles)	38.6
Highway 101 (miles)	6.6
Bus Stops	5.1
Bus Routes (miles)	7.8
Bicycle Routes (miles)	4.7
Public Access and Recreation	
Beach Access Points	100.0
Parks (acres)	6.0
Oil and Gas	
Wells	8.2
ESH	
ESH Areas (acres)	1.4

Note: These percentages were calculated using the “high” sea level rise scenario, and assume that existing coastal armoring remains in place as-is and no adaptation measures are taken. Percentages are for all unincorporated County areas, but impacts would be within the coastal zone.

Asset sectors not included in Table 5.4-2, such as wastewater and water supply utilities, are expected to be affected as well. Along the south county coast, up to 4.6 miles of sewer main, 590 parcels with septic systems, and 227 manholes are expected to be subject to coastal flooding and erosion by the year 2100. Additionally, water supply mainline pipes, hydrants, valves, and private wells in the Montecito and Carpinteria Valley Water District areas are predicted to be vulnerable.

Notwithstanding the results noted above, very few public facilities are at risk. No police or medical facilities are vulnerable, and the fire station and schools identified as vulnerable are not at risk until sea level rise is in excess of three feet.

Greater detail on all potentially vulnerable assets is contained within the Vulnerability Assessment (Attachment B). Ultimately, this important modeling and mapping effort provides a strong foundation for considering methods to adapt to future sea level rise. Updated LCP policies and ordinances will help facilitate the adaptation process by potentially avoiding or mitigating hazards.

5.5 Stakeholder and Public Outreach

Technical Stakeholder Group/Meetings

A technical stakeholder group was formed during the modeling and mapping phases of the project. The stakeholders encompassed a wide range of local professionals and interested parties from city and state agencies, utilities and special districts, civic and environmental organizations, and local tribes (Attachment G). Meetings were held prior to the completion of certain project milestones (2014-2016) and stakeholder participants offered feedback on the project as it progressed, which was incorporated into the deliverables.

Coastal Commission Staff Consultation

Pursuant to the approved scope of work for this grant-funded project, County staff informally consulted with local Coastal Commission staff very early in the policy development process. County and Coastal Commission staff undertook two iterations of policy recommendations and feedback. The correspondence from these two iterations is provided in Attachment E.

County and Coastal Commission staff agreed on many issues and on a majority of the draft policy language. Areas of agreement included the following:

- The sea level rise coastal hazard maps can be used as a “screening tool” and an initial step toward site-specific analysis of new development proposals. If a parcel or development is potentially subject to future hazards from sea level rise, a site-specific analysis could include a hazards report and wave run-up study. Attachment D contains draft “Sea Level Rise Coastal Hazard Screening Area” maps that are proposed as an initial step to determining potential vulnerabilities at proposed development sites.
- Flexible design concepts can be used to avoid or adapt to sea level rise.
- The County shall work with land owners to pursue new public coastal accessways if existing access points are lost.
- The County shall collaborate with local and state agencies on regional sediment management solutions.
- A Notice to Property Owner or other real estate notification shall be required to notify future property owners of potential hazards associated with sea level rise.

In contrast, the following recommendations from Coastal Commission staff exemplify issues where agreement has not yet been reached and continued discussion may be needed:

- Property owners shall waive their right to a future shoreline protective device upon receipt of a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for new development.
- New CDPs shall require a monitoring plan to identify the impacts of shoreline armoring on the surrounding area and determine when the armoring device is no longer needed for protection.
- The County shall prepare shoreline management plans for County recreational areas, especially those areas that do not have park master plans.
- Property owners near public trust lands (for example, along a beach or tidal area) shall demonstrate that they hold adequate legal title at specified intervals. The County shall then require that property owners remove their development if the beach or high tide line moves inland and their property has migrated onto public trust lands.
- New engineered staircases or accessways on a bluff face shall provide for public beach access; new, private staircases or accessways on a bluff face shall be prohibited.

P&D staff will continue to work collaboratively with Coastal Commission staff on topics where continued discussion may be needed. Planning staff is seeking direction from your Commissions on these topics and on the discussion draft LCP policies in Attachment C.

Public Meetings

A wide-ranging public outreach process was undertaken from August through October of this year. The intent of the outreach was to present the results of the Vulnerability Assessment and to discuss potential policy changes for the LCP Amendment. Long Range Planning staff held two public workshops, one beach demonstration event, and presented at several targeted meetings for County and community advisory and nonprofit groups. Table 5.5-1 lists all of the public outreach events, dates, and locations.

Table 5.5-1. Coastal Resiliency Project Public Outreach Events

Date in 2017	Event	Location
August 18	Building Industry Advisory Group Meeting	Santa Barbara
August 31	Public Workshop #1	Rincon Beach Club, Carpinteria
September 14	Public Workshop #2	Goleta Valley Community Center
September 16	Interactive Sea Level Rise Demonstration Project	Summerland Beach (Lookout Park)
September 29	Gaviota Property Owners / Ranchers Meeting	El Capitan Canyon Campground
September 6 and October 4	Agricultural Advisory Committee	Solvang and Buellton
October 2	Citizen's Planning Association Meeting	Santa Barbara
October 11	Central Coast Sustainability Summit	University of California, Santa Barbara

One comment letter was received after the public outreach and is within Attachment F. All other public feedback was received by phone or in person. Public comment spanned topics ranging from the protection of existing utility infrastructure along the coast (including water and

wastewater facilities), to the importance of working with local landowners to find new public coastal access ways if existing access ways become unusable, to supporting solutions that would have multiple benefits (for example, habitat and shoreline protection). Modifications to the potential new policies were made in response to the public feedback and comments received.

6.0 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Local Coastal Program Amendment

Staff reviewed the existing policies in the Coastal Land Use Plan to determine where new policies are recommended to be added, or where existing policies are recommended to be enhanced, as a result of the information from the Vulnerability Assessment and scientific reports regarding sea level rise along the California coast. The Hazard policies in the Coastal Land Use plan work to ensure compliance with Coastal Act policies regarding new development in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard, as well as policies regarding coastal armoring and flood control measures. The hazards include bluff and beach erosion, geologic hazards, flooding, and fire. Hazards such as flooding and erosion already occur along the coastline, and sea level rise will exacerbate those existing hazards.

At this time, staff does not recommend any changes to zoning or land use designations of property. Rather, staff is proposing changes to existing hazard, flood protection, energy (oil and gas), coastal access, and recreation policies. In addition, 19 new policies or potential development standards are proposed to address shoreline management and protection, new coastal development, public access, transportation, coastal hazards, coastal habitat, and nonconforming structures. Changes to the Coastal Zoning Ordinance would be minimal and serve to implement the updated policies. All draft policies for the Commissions' consideration are in Attachment C to this report. Definitions and diagrams to support the proposed changes are also provided (pages 17-18 of Attachment C)

7.0 NEXT STEPS

Staff is currently seeking the County and Montecito Planning Commissions' initial comments and direction. Staff will then brief the Board of Supervisors to request their initial comments and direction as well. The Board of Supervisors briefing is tentatively scheduled for February 27, 2018. A proposed LCP Amendment will then be brought to each Planning Commission individually, for the Commissions to review and make recommendations as appropriate. The proposed LCP amendments are anticipated to return to the Commissions in the spring of 2018.

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) states that an activity is not subject to CEQA if the activity is not a project. Section 15378(b)(2) specifies that a project does not include general policy making or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect

physical changes in the environment. The staff briefing and request for the County and Montecito Planning Commissions' comments and direction are administrative activities that do not authorize new development or otherwise result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. Therefore, this activity is not a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(2) and is not subject to CEQA per CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3). Please see the Notice of Exemption (Attachment A) for additional details on the CEQA exemption determination.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Notice of Exemption
- B. County of Santa Barbara Sea Level Rise and Coastal Hazards Vulnerability Assessment and Technical Report
- C. Draft LCP Amendment for Discussion
- D. Draft Sea Level Rise Coastal Hazard Screening Area Maps
- E. Comments and Letters Between California Coastal Commission Staff and County Staff
- F. Public Comment
- G. List of Stakeholders

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