

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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W35c

Prepared May 19, 2017 (for June 7, 2017 Hearing)

To: Commissioners and Interested Persons

From: Susan Craig, Central Coast District Manager
Ryan Moroney, Supervising Coastal Planner

**Subject: City of Santa Cruz LCP Amendment Number LCP-3-STC-17-0016-1-Part G
(Elimination of FAR in R-1-10 Zoning District)**

Proposed Amendment

The City of Santa Cruz proposes to modify Section 24.10.350 of the LCP's Implementation Plan (IP) to eliminate the maximum floor area ratio (FAR)¹ requirement for structures over one story in height that are located in the R-1-10 zoning district (i.e., single-family residentially-zoned lots with a minimum lot area of 10,000 square feet). See **Exhibit 1** for the proposed amendment text in strikethrough and underline.

Minor LCP Amendment Determination

Pursuant to Title 14 of California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 13555, the Executive Director may determine that a proposed LCP amendment is "minor." 14 CCR Section 13554 defines minor LCP amendments. Among other things, minor LCP amendments include:

14 CCR Section 13554(a). Changes in wording which make the use as designated in the zoning ordinances, zoning district maps or other implementing actions more specific and which do not change the kind, location, intensity, or density of use and which are found by the Executive Director of the Commission or the Commission to be consistent with the land use plan as certified by the Commission.

If the Executive Director determines that an amendment is minor, that determination must be reported to the Commission. If one-third or more of the appointed members of the Commission request that it be processed as a major LCP amendment, then the amendment shall be set for a future public hearing; if less than one-third of the appointed members of the Commission object to the minor LCP amendment determination, then the amendment is deemed approved and it becomes a certified part of the LCP immediately (in this case, on June 7, 2017).

¹ Floor area ratio is the relationship between the total amount of usable floor area of a building and the total area of the lot on which the building stands. This ratio is determined by dividing the total, or gross, floor area of the building by the gross area of the lot.

The purpose of this notice is to advise interested parties of the Executive Director's determination that the proposed LCP amendment is minor.

The existing LCP includes a maximum FAR of .30 for structures greater than one story in the R-1-10 zoning district. In other words, for residences two stories and above, the total usable floor area could be no larger than 30% of the total lot size. For one story residences, no FAR requirement is currently in place, and residential size limits are instead regulated by other LCP siting and design standards, including setbacks and heights. The proposed amendments to IP Section 24.10.350 would eliminate the FAR standard for all residences in this zoning district. The City states the reason for eliminating the FAR standard is to encourage residential structures with smaller building footprints. The current FAR restriction incentivizes single-story residences with larger building footprints since FAR/size limits are only triggered for residences two stories and above. Removing the FAR standard should therefore encourage a more compact design. The City offered the following example:

For a 10,000 square foot lot, the maximum size of a single story home would be 4,400 square feet assuming the lot was rectangular with a minimum width of 70 feet (based on setbacks and other constraints). With a FAR restriction of 0.3, a two-story home would be limited in area to 3,000 square feet, and thus someone wanting a 4,400 square foot residence would likely choose to build a single story house with a 4,400-square-foot footprint. Without the FAR restriction, a 4,400 sf, two-story home could be built that would have a 2,200 square foot footprint, thus minimizing potential environmental impacts.

Additionally, the only parcels in the Coastal Zone within the R-1-10 zoning district are located well inland of the coast and thus the proposed amendment, which may result in more two-story development in this zoning district, will not impact views to and along the coast. Further, most existing parcels in this zoning district are developed, and those that are not developed are constrained by slope and riparian setback issues. Thus, encouraging a more compact design with a smaller lot coverage footprint is consistent with LCP policies that protect such resources. Therefore, the proposed amendments are consistent with the City's certified Land Use Plan, and do not change the kind, location, intensity, or density of use of land. Thus, the proposed LCP amendment qualifies under the regulatory definition of a minor LCP amendment. (14 CCR § 13554(a).)

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The Coastal Commission's review and development process for LCPs and LCP amendments has been certified by the Secretary of Resources as being the functional equivalent of the environmental review required by CEQA. (See 14 CCR § 15251(f).) The City has determined that the project is exempt from further review under CEQA, pursuant to 14 CCR Section 15061(b)(3), and a Notice of Exemption has been prepared. Specifically, the City found that the proposed amendments will not have a significant effect on the environment. As such, the proposed LCP amendment is not expected to result in any significant adverse impact on the environment. Thus, it is unnecessary for the Commission to suggest modifications to the proposed amendment to address adverse environmental impacts because the proposed amendment, as submitted, will not result in any significant environmental effects for which feasible mitigation measures would be required.

Coastal Commission Concurrence

The Executive Director will report this minor LCP amendment determination, and any comments received on it, to the Coastal Commission at its June 7, 2017 meeting in Arcata. If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the proposed amendment or the method under which it is being processed, please contact Ryan Moroney at the Central Coast District Office in Santa Cruz.

Procedural Note - LCP Amendment Action Deadline

This proposed LCP amendment was filed as complete on April 28, 2017. It amends the IP only and the 60-day action deadline is June 27, 2017. (*See* Pub. Res. Code §§ 30513, 30514(b).) Thus, unless the Commission extends the action deadline (it may be extended by up to one year per Pub. Res. Code § 30517), the Commission has until June 27, 2017 to take a final action on this LCP amendment.

Exhibit:

Exhibit 1: Proposed Amendment Text (redline)