

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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TO: California Coastal Commissioners and Interested Public

FROM: Dr. Kate Huckelbridge, Executive Director
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SUBJECT: Briefing and Public Workshop on Draft Guidance on Processing LCP
Amendments for Accessory Dwelling Units in the Coastal Zone.
Informational item only.

Exhibit 1: [Draft Guidance on Processing LCP Amendments for Accessory Dwelling
Units in the Coastal Zone](#)

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I. BACKGROUND

The widening income gap and unmet demand for housing throughout the nation continues to exacerbate housing inequity in California, especially in coastal areas, where housing and rental costs are consistently above the state and national average. To address this critical issue, the state Legislature has enacted a number of laws over the last decade that are designed to encourage construction of additional housing units in appropriate locations. In particular, state housing laws have been changed to facilitate development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs), which can be more affordable to build and to rent than other forms of market rate housing.

[Senate Bill 1077](#) (Chapter 454, Statutes of 2024) requires the California Coastal Commission, by July 1, 2026, and in coordination with the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), to develop written guidance for local governments to facilitate the preparation of LCP amendments that clarify and simplify the permitting process for ADUs and JADUs in the coastal zone. The legislation further requires that a draft of the guidance be made publicly available for thirty (30) days prior to a public workshop to receive public comment on the draft. The Draft Guidance on Processing LCP Amendments for ADUs in the Coastal Zone ([Exhibit 1](#)), and this item on the May 13, 2026 agenda, fulfills that requirement.¹ Feedback received prior to and at the workshop will be used to inform the Final Guidance. In addition, Commission and HCD staff have solicited public participation, particularly from local governments, in the form of surveys.² Public comments received prior to publication of the draft have been addressed and incorporated into this Draft Guidance, as discussed further below.

II. SUMMARY OF THE DRAFT GUIDANCE

The Draft Guidance on Processing LCP Amendments for ADUs in the Coastal Zone ([Exhibit 1](#)) contains an overview of recent changes to State ADU Law, discusses the authority that the Coastal Act grants the Commission and local governments over ADUs and JADUs in the coastal zone, and provides examples of past ADU-related LCP amendments certified by the Commission.

The Draft Guidance urges local governments in the coastal zone to review, update, or add ADU regulations within their LCPs, so they align with State ADU Law while still upholding Coastal Act protections. It emphasizes using available flexibility to remove local standards that unnecessarily hinder ADU development, provided that coastal resources, public access, and hazard safety are not compromised. The Draft Guidance also explains that LCP amendments related to ADUs may be processed as minor, de

¹ The Draft Guidance was published on April 13, 2026, thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled public workshop on May 13, 2026.

² Surveys were collected from members of the public and local governments starting on September 29, 2025, at the following web address: <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/sb1077/>.

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minimis, or major amendments depending on the extent of policy changes and their potential impacts on coastal resources.

To reduce the need for frequent updates, the Commission encourages local governments to structure ADU ordinances, so they remain adaptable as state law evolves, such as by referencing the current certified version of State ADU Law or limiting LCP content to coastal-specific provisions. The Draft Guidance also notes that jurisdictions may pursue Categorical Exclusion Orders to exempt certain ADUs from Coastal Development Permit requirements when they pose no significant coastal impacts. Finally, it stresses the importance of early coordination with both the HCD and Commission staff to streamline amendment preparation and approval.

A. Comments Received

This Draft Guidance was prepared in collaboration with HCD. The Draft Guidance also incorporates public feedback received to date, as summarized below. A public workshop will be held at the Commission's May 13, 2026 hearing, and feedback received up to and during the workshop will be used to inform the Final Guidance, which will be published by July 1, 2026.

- Several local government representatives raised concerns about potential conflicts between State ADU Law and the Coastal Act, such as with respect to parking requirements, public views, future flood hazards due to sea level rise, and environmentally sensitive habitat area.
- Local government staff frequently had questions about the permitting and public hearing procedures for ADU projects, as well as other procedural differences between coastal versus inland areas.
- Some jurisdictions expressed that it has been challenging with previous or ongoing attempts to update ADU provisions in their LCPs, given that State ADU Law frequently changes. Many discussed the need for continuous and close coordination with HCD and Coastal Commission staff.
- Numerous local government representatives and members of the public reiterated that ADUs and JADUs should be built in areas able to accommodate them (such as urbanized areas), as opposed to hazardous or environmentally sensitive areas.
- Members of the public had differing opinions on whether ADUs or JADUs should be generally promoted or limited in the coastal zone.
- Both local governments and members of the public mentioned permitting costs of ADUs in the coastal zone as an issue.

Most of the comments received thus far are concerned with the contents of ADU ordinances and policies, including coastal resource protection issues, procedural aspects of coastal development permits (CDPs), and the harmonization of standards between State ADU Law and the Coastal Act. In other words, such comments do not directly concern the facilitation of processing ADU LCP amendments, which is the focus of the current Guidance as required by Senate Bill 1077. As discussed in the next section, many of the comments received to date will be addressed in a future and separate guidance document.

III. NEXT STEPS

The Draft Guidance on Processing LCP Amendments for ADUs in the Coastal Zone is available for public comment for a period of 30 days beginning April 13, 2026, and closing May 13, 2026. Members of the public and local government representatives are encouraged to provide comments via email to SB1077ADU@coastal.ca.gov. The Draft Guidance on Processing LCP Amendments for ADUs in the Coastal Zone is available for review on the Commission's [website](#) and as [Exhibit 1](#) to this staff report. After the public workshop on this item, Commission staff will review all public comments received to date and continue coordination with HCD to finalize the Guidance, which will be published no later than July 1, 2026.

In addition to the Guidance on Processing LCP Amendments for ADUs in the Coastal Zone, Commission staff intends to prepare a future and separate guidance document on the permitting aspect of ADU projects. That guidance would include discussion of issues including, but not limited to, coastal resource impacts and issues related to ADUs, harmonization of state ADU standards and Coastal Act requirements, permitting and hearing procedures, streamlining opportunities for ADU projects, and discussion of jurisdictions that do not currently have a fully certified LCP. This "second phase" memorandum will go beyond the current Guidance document's emphasis on how local governments can amend LCPs to account for recent legislative changes and how LCP amendments with ADU policies can be processed more quickly. As such, additional coordination with local governments and members of the public (including interested parties such as ADU developers, housing advocates, and coastal-affiliated California Native American Tribes) will be needed to obtain input on additional ADU-related topics that have not been covered to date. Additional information on this second phase will be announced after the Final Guidance required under Senate Bill 1077 is posted.