



2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

p: (707) 565-1900

f: (707) 565-1017

Tennis Wick
Director

Scott Orr
Assistant Director

Michelle Arellano
Administration

Nathan Quarles
Engineering and Construction

Emi Thériault
Planning

Tyra Harrington
Code Enforcement

Genevieve Bertone
Communications

Steve Mosiurchak
Fire Marshal

John Mack
Natural Resources

Brian Keefer
Ombudsperson

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 08 May 2024

TO: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Public

FROM: Permit Sonoma

SUBJECT: Status Update on the Local Coastal Plan Certification Process
(PLP13-0014) CCC File: LCP-2-SON-23-0058-2

On July 17, 2023 the Board of Supervisors adopted a comprehensive update to the Local Coastal Plan for Sonoma County. Under the provisions of the Coastal Act the adopted Plan is not effective until certified by the California Coastal Commission. Staff submitted the Certification Transmittal on November 27, 2023 and received initial comments from Coastal Commission staff on December 11, 2023. After subsequent resubmittal on April 2, 2024, a second filing letter was provided from the Coastal Commission requesting additional clarifications.

Once deemed complete by the Coastal Commission Staff, the Adopted Local Coastal Plan will be scheduled for public hearing within 90 days, unless extended for good cause by the Coastal Commission. This memo includes a summary of project status and next steps for the Certification of the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan.

Background

The California Coastal Act requires local governments in the Coastal Zone to either prepare a Local Coastal Program or to formally ask the California Coastal Commission to do so. To preserve local control, Sonoma County has prepared a Local Coastal Program, most recently certified in 2001. The Local Coastal Program must regulate land use and protect coastal resources consistent with the Coastal Act and must include both a Land Use Plan and Implementation Plan. In Sonoma County, the Local Coastal Program consists of three components: Local Coastal Plan (Land Use Plan), Coastal Zoning Ordinance (Implementation Plan), and Coastal Administrative Manual (Implementation Plan).

Public Participation and Meeting History

The Local Coastal Plan update process has included various public engagement opportunities over the last 10 years including workshops since 2013 and public review drafts dating back to 2015. In 2019, with the publication of the *2019 Public Review Draft*, a series of 12 public workshops informed the creation of the *Revised Public Review Draft 2021*. The Sonoma County Planning Commission held eight public hearings on the *Revised Public Review Draft 2021* and recommended the resulting *Planning Commission Recommended Local Coastal Plan* to the Board of Supervisors on June 29, 2022. In 2022 and 2023 additional subject-specific engagement activities were held and the Board of Supervisors held a general workshop and three public hearings on the *Planning Commission Recommended Draft*, adopting the *2023 Adopted Local Coastal Plan* on July 17, 2023.

The Board of Supervisors Resolution for Adoption further directed staff to pursue certification and return, if needed, with Coastal Commission modifications for adoption. After the Certification of the Local Coastal Plan Update, staff will begin additional public outreach activities on the Implementation Plan, including the Coastal Zoning Code and Administrative Manual, for consistency with the new policy language.

Certification Process

The Coastal Commission must find that the plan is consistent with the Coastal Act, at which point it becomes effective.

Staff submitted the certification transmittal to the North Central Coast District Office on November 27, 2023 and received initial comments from Coastal Commission Staff on December 11, 2023. After the subsequent resubmittal on April 2, 2024, a second filing letter was provided from local Coastal Commission Staff requesting some additional clarifications. Early comments in the first filing letter included request for a complete matrix detailing responses to all previous Coastal Commission Staff comments, including comments on the preceding drafts, and additional clarification on the pending implementation plan update and interim strategies for the Local Coastal Plan.

The second filing letter, dated April 19, 2024, asked for further detail on the current authority of the Administrative Manual and Coastal Zoning Code while they are being updated for consistency with the Updated Plan. Staff intends to confirm that the existing Implementation Plan will remain effective until formally superseded, except where there is a direct conflict with the Updated Coastal Plan. Additionally, policy language in the Plan details that the most specific provisions will apply whenever the Plan or other certified local regulations may conflict.

Staff is currently working to address the most recent comments of the Coastal Commission Staff and expects to resubmit no later than May 16, 2024. After the physical copy of the submittal is received, Coastal Commission Staff have 10 business days to provide Permit Sonoma with an updated filing letter confirming the status of the application. Should the status be complete, the Commission staff will have 90 days to bring the item forward for certification in public hearing. Staff expects that the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan would be brought to hearing on an August agenda.

If the Coastal Commission decides “not to certify [the plan], in whole or in part,” then the Coastal Commission must “provide a written explanation and may suggest modifications.” In turn, if the suggested modifications are adopted by the Board of Supervisors, then the plan is deemed certified. (Pub. Res. Code § 30512, subd. (b).) “The Coastal Commission lacks authority to dictate the precise contents of the LCP. (Pub. Res. Code §§ 30500, subd. (c), 30512.2.) The Coastal Commission’s acceptance or rejection of the proposed plan can only be based on compliance with the Coastal Act.

Permit Sonoma staff has provided public comment and distribution lists to the Coastal Commission Staff as required materials for the transmittal package. Additionally, members of the public will be invited to provide comment to the North Central Coast District Office and participate in the future public hearing, file reference LCP-2-SON-23-0058-2. Permit Sonoma Staff will continue to provide public updates through the existing webpage and distribution lists.

Stay Involved:

Permit Sonoma Email: PRMD-LCP-Update@sonoma-county.org

Project Website: [Link to Proposed Local Coastal Plan Website](#)

Contact: Claudette Diaz, Project Planner
Cecily Condon, Project Review Division Manager

Coastal Commission Email: NorthCentralCoast@coastal.ca.gov