

# **2023 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DRAFT**

**Sonoma County  
Local Coastal Plan**

## **APPENDIX A: DESIGN GUIDELINES July 2023**



**Local Coastal Program  
Permit Sonoma**

2550 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Adopted by Resolution No. 23-XXXX  
of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors  
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# **APPENDIX A: DESIGN GUIDELINES**

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# APPENDIX A: DESIGN GUIDELINES

## 1. COASTAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 1.1 Development

Development shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources.

**New Development.** The following design components shall be incorporated into site planning for new development:

- (a) Open space for important historic and natural features
- (b) Pedestrian use and movement
- (c) Spaces and opportunities for social interaction with community members
- (d) Visibility of access/entrances to buildings and use areas
- (e) Landscaping

**Design and Siting.** The following guidelines shall be used for design and siting of new structures and development:

- (a) Structures shall be sited and designed to preserve unobstructed broad views of the ocean and minimize visual impacts.
- (b) Development in open fields shall be prohibited.
- (c) In inland valleys, development outside of existing communities shall be located on the edge of the valley or within or behind existing tree stands or groupings, leaving the valley floor and agricultural land open.
- (d) Structures shall be clustered to the extent feasible.
- (e) Structures shall be sited behind or near existing vegetation or topographic relief to screen them from view from public roads and use areas; if not possible, native trees and shrubs which will not grow to block views to the coastline but will provide full screening of structures within 5 years shall be planted.
- (f) New development shall be sited and designed to minimize removing trees. Trees shall be retained to the extent possible. Structures shall be located within or behind wooded areas, tree stands, or tree groupings to screen them from view.

- (g) On ridgelines, pruning or removing tree stands or groupings shall be prohibited if doing so would make structures more visible from public roads and use areas. Removing tree Windbreaks shall be prohibited unless it is necessary to remove diseased trees.
- (h) On hillsides, new structures shall be sited and designed such that they do not project above the hillside or silhouette against the skyline. On ridgelines, development which would project above the ridgeline shall be prohibited.

**Development Scale.** Development shall be designed to complement and be in scale with the site and the surrounding environment and community.

**Building Height.** The following criteria shall be used for building height:

- (a) West of State Highway 1: Building height shall be limited to 16 feet. An increase in height to a maximum of 24 feet shall be permitted if (a) the structure is no higher than 16 feet above grade directly across from the building site, and (b) the structure will neither affect views to the ocean or rivers nor be out of character with surrounding structures.
- (b) East of State Highway 1: Building height shall be limited to 24 feet. An increase in height to a maximum of 35 feet shall be permitted if (a) the structure is no higher than 24 feet above grade directly across from the building site, and (b) the structure will neither affect views to the ocean or rivers nor be out of character with surrounding structures.

**Minimize Development Impacts.** New development shall be sited and designed to minimize the impacts of noise, light, glare, and odors on adjacent properties and the larger community.

**Utility Lines.** All extensions of utility distribution lines to serve new development shall be placed underground.

**Grading and Topography.** The following guidelines shall be used for grading/topographic alteration:

- (a) Roads, buildings, and other structural improvements shall be designed and constructed to fit the natural topography.
- (b) Development shall be concentrated on level areas so that steeper hillsides are left undisturbed. Grading and development shall be discouraged on hillsides with a slope of more than 30 percent.
- (c) Grading shall be minimized to the extent necessary to site new structures.
- (d) Grading and construction shall follow the natural contours of the landscape.

- (e) Alteration of natural landforms as a result of grading, cutting, or filling shall be minimized. New development which requires grading, cutting, or filling that would significantly alter or destroy the appearance of natural landforms shall be prohibited.
- (f) On hillsides, structures shall be designed to fit the site rather than altering the natural landforms to accommodate buildings designed for level sites.
- (g) Natural landforms shall be restored as completely as possible after any permitted temporary alteration during construction.

**Passive Solar.** Passive solar design should be used for new development. Passive solar design involves the use of various techniques in siting and designing new buildings to capitalize on heat and light from the sun and reduce the need for mechanical and electrical systems for internal lighting, heating, and cooling. These techniques shall include placing buildings to maximize solar orientation for both winter heating and summer cooling; placing windows or other openings and reflective surfaces so that during the day natural light provides effective internal lighting (i.e., daylighting); large south-facing windows; natural shading and ventilation; and building materials that absorb heat from the sun and slowly release it to warm the building.

**Impervious Surfaces.** Paved and other impervious surfaces shall be minimized to allow for infiltration of stormwater to groundwater.

**Agricultural Structures.** Large agricultural structures shall be sited out of view. Encourage use of designs and exterior finish materials and colors that blend with the natural vegetation.

**Exterior Building Material and Finishes.** The following guidelines shall be used for exterior finish materials and colors:

- (a) Non-reflective, natural materials and earth colors that blend with the vegetation shall be used on the site unless the building is historic or an historic reproduction, in which case the colors shall be in keeping with the historic style.
- (b) Composition shingle and shake roofs in dark natural or earthen colors compatible with the exterior finish colors of the buildings shall be used.
- (c) Wood or shingle siding shall be used.
- (d) Metal window frames shall not be used unless they are bronze anodized aluminum or baked enamel.
- (e) Dark and non-reflective driveway materials shall be used.

**Landscape Design.** The following guidelines shall be used for landscaping:

- (a) Landscaping shall be used to integrate the manmade and natural environments and to screen and soften the visual impact of new development.
- (b) Landscaping shall be designed to blend in with the character of the site and area.
- (c) Existing vegetation, topography, rock outcrops, and natural water bodies shall be incorporated into the landscaping plan.
- (d) Native and drought-tolerant plant materials shall be used in landscaping, especially where it is visible from public roads.
- (e) Must meet Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.
- (h) The following features shall be shown on the landscaping plan: outdoor lighting, signs, trash bins, fencing, utility equipment, paving, and outdoor furniture.
- (i) Landscaping shall be used to screen parking areas from view.
- (j) Planting vegetation west of State Highway 1 which could grow to block views to the coastline shall be prohibited.

**Fences.** Fences shall be discouraged on property lines. Fences shall be designed to be extensions of the main building, constructed of materials that complement the main building, and to be less than six feet unless they are used for screening service areas or for privacy. Fences are development subject to a coastal development permit and shall not be constructed to obstruct coastal views.

**Parking.** Parking areas shall be sited and designed so that they are out of view or screened from view. Screening may include planting of trees and shrubs.

**Exterior Lighting.** Exterior lighting shall be designed to be functional, subtle, and architecturally integrated with the style and exterior finish materials and colors of the buildings. This lighting shall be fully shielded, directed downward, and use bulbs that do not exceed 700 lumens and color temperature less than 3000 Kelvin. Light trespass shall not exceed one lux at the property line when all exterior lighting is operated. Night lighting that would increase existing ambient light levels in Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs) shall be prohibited.

## **1.2 Residential Building Design**

The following additional guidelines shall be used for design of residential development:

- (a) Traditional architectural styles of the Sonoma County coast shall be used in older development areas and contemporary styles in newer subdivisions.



- (b) Structures shall be designed to be compatible with the characteristics of the community; and shall be related in size, scale, shape, and style to that of existing adjacent and nearby structures and to natural features.
- (c) Non-reflective, pitched roofs shall be used, and roof slopes shall be related to those on existing adjacent and nearby structures.
- (d) Accessory buildings shall be designed to be consistent with the architecture and exterior finish materials and colors of the main building.

**Private Roads and Driveways.** Development shall be designed for sharing of private roads and driveways.

### **1.3 Commercial Building Design**

The following additional guidelines shall be used for design of commercial buildings:

- (a) Buildings shall be compatible with the predominant design of existing buildings in the area.
- (b) Building height shall be limited to 24 feet unless a greater height would not have an adverse impact on coastal views and there are overriding considerations.
- (c) Wood or shingle siding and natural or earth colors shall be used.
- (d) Pitched, non-reflective roofs shall be used unless the building is an historic reproduction.
- (e) Exterior lighting shall be functional, subtle, and integrated architecturally with the building style, materials, and colors.
- (f) Parking areas shall be screened from view through siting, design, and landscaping.

**Signs.** The following guidelines, in addition to coastal sign regulations found in the Coastal Zoning Code, shall be used for signs:

- (a) The use of outdoor signs shall be minimized.
- (b) The number of signs on a site shall be limited to one attached sign per building side which faces the site access road(s).
- (c) Signs shall be designed in terms of location, size, height, shape, color, and illumination so that they relate to and are compatible with the surrounding land uses, complement the design of existing and proposed buildings, and are compatible with nearby conforming signs. Signs shall be designed to be unobtrusive.
- (d) Signs shall be designed to be simple and easy to read.
- (e) Signs shall be designed to be vandal-proof and weather-resistant.

- (f) Signs not attached to buildings shall be of monument style and have landscaping at the base. The maximum height of monument signs shall be six feet (6') above
- (g) Signs attached to buildings shall be integral to the building design. Attaching signs on towers, spires, roofs, or roof fascias shall be avoided.
- (h) On attached signs, signs comprised of individual letters applied directly to the building surface shall be preferred over attached box or cabinet signs.
- (i) Use of struts, braces, kickbacks, or guy wires to support signs shall be avoided.
- (j) On internally illuminated signs, illumination shall be limited to letters and graphic elements with an opaque background.
- (k) On externally illuminated signs, the source of illumination shall be dark sky compliance and shielded from adjacent roads and properties.
- (l) For multiple occupancy buildings a Master Sign Program shall be developed to promote design consistency and facilitate processing permits.
- (m) Along designated scenic corridors signs shall be for onsite advertising purposed only.

## 2. BODEGA BAY DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 2.1 Bodega Bay Core Design Guidelines

New development located within the Bodega Bay Core Area shall be consistent with the Bodega Bay Core Design Guidelines in addition to the Coastal Design Guidelines, and **Policy C-OSRC-4e (Existing LCP Revised)**. In the case of conflicts, the Bodega Bay Core Area Design Guidelines shall supersede the Coast Community Design Guidelines.

For the Bodega Bay Core Area (area including Taylor Tract and the planned residential area south of Taylor Tract; State Highway 1; and the area that was proposed for the former State Highway 1 bypass), the following design guidelines shall be used in addition to the Coastal Design Guidelines. In the case of conflicts, the Bodega Bay Core Area Design Guidelines shall supersede the Coast Community Design Guidelines.

**Building Siting.** Structures shall be sited and designed to take advantage of bay views without blocking bay views of neighboring structures.

**Building Height.** Building height shall be limited to 16 feet except that in major developments up to 15 percent of the units may exceed the height limit. Height for residential structures is measured as the vertical distance from the average level of the highest and lowest points of that portion of the lot covered by the building to the topmost point of the roof.

**Building Design.** The following guidelines shall be used for building design:

- (a) The traditional building forms of Sonoma County coast buildings shall be used, including Greek Revival, Salt Box, and simple cottage styles similar to existing homes.
- (b) Pitched roofs shall be used. Flat roofs may be appropriate where compatible with the roofs on existing structures.
- (c) Where a building is between two existing structures, the design of that building should act as a transition between the two existing structures.

**Exterior Building Material and Finish.** The following guidelines shall be used for exterior finish materials and colors:

- (a) Wood or shingle siding shall be used.
- (b) Painted exteriors in colors similar to those on structures in Bodega Bay shall be used (i.e., rust, red, white, green, beige, brown, gray, yellow, and blue). The Design Review Committee must approve other colors. Natural wood exteriors may

be intermixed with painted exteriors but shall not dominate the new development area.

- (c) Wood windows frames painted in a contrasting but harmonizing color shall be used.

**Fences.** Fences over three feet high shall be discouraged on property lines. Traditional picket fences shall be encouraged.

**Street Width.** A minimum width for paved streets shall be encouraged, consistent with circulation, safety, and parking requirements, to provide a sense of continuity between new development and the original town of Bodega Bay.

**Bike Paths and Walkways.** Separated bike paths and pedestrian walkways shall be required on one side of the street in areas of new development.

**Setback Variation.** Variation in setbacks shall be encouraged.

**Detached Garages.** Detached garages shall be encouraged in and adjacent to the Taylor Tract. Single-car garages may be appropriate.

## **2.2 Bodega Bay Non-Core Design Guidelines**

**Policy C-OSRC-4d:** New development located within Bodega Bay outside of the Bodega Bay Core Area shall be consistent with the following Bodega Bay Non-Core Design Guidelines in addition to the Coastal Design Guidelines. In the case of conflict, these community specific guidelines shall supersede the Coast Community Design Guidelines:

- (1) The exterior of structures shall be designed to reflect the nautical character of the harbor with wooden exteriors, stained or painted white or subdued earth colors.
- (2) For heavy commercial structures, textured metal in subdued colors with proper architectural detailing and landscaping shall be encouraged to add visual interest and soften building lines.

### **3. HEIGHT, SITE AND BULK CRITERIA FOR THE SEA RANCH**

(Adopted by Board of Supervisors' Resolution #71611, April 20, 1982)

Subsection 30610.6 (e) of the Coastal Act charges the Executive Director with the duty of specifying design criteria for the height, site and bulk of any developments visible from areas where scenic view easements have been established. The purpose of such criteria is to ensure that new development will not substantially detract from the scenic view areas identified in compliance with Subsection 30610.6 (d). Below are the criteria designated pursuant to this new portion of the Coastal Act. Enforcement of these standards shall be the responsibility of the County of Sonoma.

#### 1. Site

- a. Structures should be located upon lots to take maximum advantage of topographical features and existing tree masses. This is particularly true of those lots nearest to Highway One, since a poorly sited structure in close proximity to a public viewing area may have a substantial adverse impact on views to the coast. When sites are designated as 'tree' or 'topo' sites, this means that special attention to the noted condition of the lot shall be incorporated into the design of the project. Similarly, 'frontage' or 'low' site designations indicate that a proposed dwelling must be placed on the identified portion of the lot (generally the point furthest away from Highway One), in order to minimize obstruction of coastal views.
- b. Definitions
  - i. Low Site - Designates lots on which the home shall be sited on the lowest portion of the lot.
  - ii. Frontage Site - Designates lots on which the house shall be sited on the portion of the lot nearest the frontage road.
  - iii. Topo Site - Designates lots on which the home shall be sited in such a manner as to promote shielding of the home from public view by the terrain.
  - iv. Tree Site - Designates lots on which the home shall be sited to promote shielding of the home from public view by hedgerows and other existing trees.

#### 2. Height

Height is measured as follows: From the natural grade on the highest side of the improvement to the highest point of the roof or any projection therefrom.

### 3. Bulk

Bulk is determined by calculating the gross square footage of the proposed structure or structures (i.e., garages are included). Bulk control is basically intended to reduce visual impacts on the landscape; therefore, different categories have been developed to reflect the degree of exposure of the site under consideration. Bulk limits in each category are as follows:

Category 1: 1250 square feet (highly visually sensitive lots)

Category 2: 1760 square feet (less visually sensitive lots adjacent to Highway One)

Category 3: 2250 square feet

Absent a specific designation of either Category 1 or 2, Category 3 shall apply to all lots west of Highway One.

### 4. Specific Designations

Specific design criteria have been established using the definitions and policies discussed above for each lot which is both visible from a scenic view easement and subject to a design recommendation in the Commission's Overall Conditions and Findings. Subject to the exception detailed below, houses on sites for which specific design criteria have been established must conform to these designations. The County shall have the responsibility for enforcing these criteria, using whatever review process it deems most effective.

A variance to a height, site and/or bulk designation may be allowed where the County makes a written finding that the house design is consistent with Coastal Act view protection objectives. Such variances, however, shall be subject to the following restrictions:

Height and Bulk - variations in these categories shall not exceed 25% of the height or bulk limit designated for the site.

Siting - alternate siting is permissible where the designated portion of the lot is the only area feasible for installation of a septic system. However, even in this situation the siting of the house shall attempt as far as possible to conform with the site designation.

**Specific Height, Site and Bulk Designations**

<b>UNIT 1</b>	Block 1	Lots 1-4, 7-9	tree site
	Block 5	Lots 1-5	16' height, Cat 2
	Block 6	Lots 2-5, 7, 8	16' height
	Block 7	Lots 4, 6, 13, 14	tree site
<b>UNIT 7</b>	Block 1	Lots 1, 3-5	16' height
	Block 2	Lots 1, 1, 4-9	frontage site, 16' height, Cat 2
	Block 3	Lots 7-8	16' height
		Lots 1-4, 6-8	tree site
	Block 4	Lots 1-4, 6-8	16' height
	Block 5	Lots 1-4, 12-16	24' height
		Lots 5-7	16' height
<b>UNIT 15</b>		Lots 3-5	16' height
		Lots 6-7	topo site, 16' height
		Lots 9-10	16' height
<b>UNIT 17</b>		Lots 44-46, 48	frontage site, 16' height, Cat 2
		Lots 53-55	16' height
		Lot 56	topo site, 16' height
<b>UNIT 18</b>		Lots 14-15, 18-19	tree sites
		Lots 20-24	low site, 16' height
		Lots 25-28, 30, 32-33, 35	16' height
		Lot 36	24' height
		Lots 39-42	frontage site, 16' height, Cat 2
		Lot 43	16' height
		Lots 44-45	topo site, 16' height
		Lots 46-48	16' height
		Lots 97-99	tree sites, 24' height
		Lots 101-102	frontage site, 16' height, Cat 2
<b>UNIT 21</b>		Lots 1-4	frontage site, 16' height, Cat 2
		Lots 6-9, 12, 14, 16	16' height
		Lots 16, 17, 19-23, 25-27	24' height
		Lots 29-32, 34	16' height
		Lots 36-40	frontage site, 16' height, Cat 2
		Lot 42	tree site, 16' height, Cat 2
		Lots 43-44	frontage site, 16' height, Cat 2
		Lots 45-46	tree site, 24' height
		Lots 52-58	tree sites, 24' height
		Lots 59, 61, 65	16' height
		Lot 68	trees site
		Lots 70, 72-75, 77-83, 85, 87-92	16' height
		Lot 94	24' height

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<b>UNIT 21 (cont.)</b>	Lots 95-98, 104-107, 109, 111-117, 119, 120, 123, 125	16' height
	Lots 127-128	16' height
	Lot 130	tree site, 24' height
	Lots 132-141-143	topo site, 24' height
	Lot 146	24' height
	Lot 147	topo site, 16' height
	Lot 148-152	16' height
	Lot 154	frontage site, 16' height
<b>Unit 24</b>	Lot 1	16' height
	Lots 36, 38-42	24' height
	Lots 52-54-56, 62-67, 73-76	16' height
	Lots 78-79	24' height
	Lots 81-87-89	16' height, Category 2
	Lots 95-99, 101-103, 105-112, 114-118, 120, 121, 124-127, 129-131, 133-135	16' height
	Lots 136-148	24' height
	Lots 158, 159	16' height, Category 2
<b>Unit 28</b>	Lot 2	frontage site, 16' height, Category 2
	Lots 4, 6, 7, 9-11	topo site, 16' height, Category 2
	Lots 15-17	16' height
	Lot 19	tree site, 24' height
	Lots 21-23, 25-28, 30-31, 33-44, 48-70, 72-78, 81-97, 99-114, 117-120	16' height
	Lot 124	24' height
	Lot 125	tree site, 24' height
	Lot 126	topo site
	Lots 128-130, 132, 135, 136, 138	tree site, 24' height
	Lots 139, 140	frontage site, 16' height, Category 2
	Lots 141-147	frontage site, 16' height, Category 1
	Lots 148-150	frontage site, 16' height