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Introduction

I PURPOSE

The purpose of this Local Coastal Plan Update is to help guide land use planning and development decisions within Sonoma County’s Coastal Zone in a manner reflective of current community priorities, responsive to present-day conditions, and consistent with the latest California Coastal Commission policy and guidance. This update also reflects policies related to coastal development that were adopted by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in General Plan 2020, while generally retaining existing land use designations previously certified by the California Coastal Commission. In addition, this Local Coastal Plan Update adds new information and policy in the following areas: sea level rise (2100 planning horizon), biotic resources, geologic hazards, water quality, and public access. The document has been re-organized to be more consistent with the General Plan 2020 format and includes previously certified Appendices, including the Housing Element, Right-to-Farm Ordinance, Historic Resources Inventory, and development guidelines specific to The Sea Ranch. This updated Local Coastal Plan considers growth on the Sonoma County Coast as projected, given historic population growth trends and anticipated increases in visitor-serving uses. Furthermore, build-out is projected based on the continuation of existing zoning land use, density, and minimum parcel size for the period 2015 to 2035.

2 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The California Coastal Act (Public Resources Code Section 30000 *et seq.*; Coastal Act) was passed by the State Legislature in 1976, became effective on January 1, 1977, and replaced the original Coastal Initiative, Proposition 20, passed in 1972. The California Coastal Act requires each local government with jurisdiction over land within the Coastal Zone to prepare a Local Coastal Program for that portion of the Coastal Zone within its jurisdiction. A Local Coastal Program (LCP) is a basic planning tool used by local governments, in partnership with the Coastal Commission, to guide development in the Coastal Zone. An LCP must cover a 20-year planning period and must be reviewed and updated every five years. Each LCP includes a Land Use Plan (LUP), which contains goals and policies for development, and an Implementation Plan (IP), which contains, in the form of zoning or

other ordinances, measures to implement the plan. The Sonoma County LCP consists of this Local Coastal Plan (the Land Use Plan) and the Coastal Zoning Ordinance (the Implementation Plan). Much of the existing Coastal Commission-certified Administrative Manual component of the Sonoma County Local Coastal Program has been incorporated into this updated Local Coastal Plan.

While each LCP reflects unique characteristics of individual local coastal communities, regional and statewide interests and concerns must also be addressed in conformity with Coastal Act goals and policies. Following adoption by a city council or county board of supervisors, an LCP is submitted to the Coastal Commission for review for consistency with Coastal Act requirements.

2.1 LAND USE PRIORITIES

The policies of the Coastal Act established a land use priority system to guide development and preserve sensitive resources in the Coastal Zone. The highest priority land use is the preservation and protection of environmentally sensitive habitats and agricultural land and timberland. Private development is the lowest priority land use. It is important to note that development potential in much of the Coastal Zone is limited by very low allowed residential density. The priority of uses is discussed in more detail in the Land Use Element.

2.2 ADMINISTRATION AND INTERPRETATION

After a Local Coastal Program has been certified by the Coastal Commission, permitting authority over most new development in the Coastal Zone is transferred to the local government, which reviews proposals for new development for conformance with the Local Coastal Program. The Coastal Commission retains permanent coastal permit jurisdiction over development proposed on tidelands, submerged lands, and public trust lands. The Commission also acts on appeals from certain local government coastal permit decisions.

There are significant differences between the State General Plan law and the Coastal Act with respect to how policies are to be read and interpreted. For example, development projects are typically required to be found consistent on balance with an overall or comprehensive reading of the General Plan's policies. In contrast, the Coastal Act requires that development projects in the Coastal Zone must be found to be consistent with all of the policies and standards of the Local Coastal Program. In the Coastal Zone, the Local Coastal Program supersedes and takes precedence over other local plans, policies, and regulations.

2.3 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING AGENCIES AND INITIATIVES

Sonoma County has a particular interest in coordination of land use, infrastructure, and environmental protection with other local, state, federal, and tribal governmental jurisdictions within the County. The County also acknowledges both the presence of federally recognized tribal governments within Sonoma County, and the need for communication and coordination with federal and tribal governments, where development of tribal and non-tribal land is proposed and where tribes seek to acquire new trust land. The Local Coastal Program also considers the policies and concerns of adjacent counties and regional agencies, such as the San Francisco Bay Conservation and

Development Commission, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Sonoma County Water Agency, the California Coastal Commission, the Coastal Conservancy, and others. The text of the various Elements notes those situations where these agencies have particular responsibilities that affect the physical development of the Sonoma County Coast and approval of permits.

2.4 PRIOR COASTAL PLANS

1980 Local Coastal Plan

The process of preparing the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan began in 1978, with the first adoption of the Local Coastal Plan by Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in May 1980. The Coastal Commission certified the plan in December 1980 and it became effective in January 1981. In 1982, the Coastal Commission certified The Sea Ranch portion of the Local Coastal Plan and the LCP implementation plan that included the Administrative Manual and the Coastal Zoning Ordinance.

1989 General Plan & Local Coastal Plan Amendments

In 1989 the County adopted a new General Plan, which directed the County to update and revise the Local Coastal Plan to be consistent with the new General Plan. In 1993, 1995, 1999, and 2001 the Coastal Commission certified amendments to the LCP, which adopted technical changes to ensure consistency with the General Plan.

Local Coastal Plan Update & 2008 General Plan

In 2001 the County started revising and updating the 1989 General Plan and simultaneously the Local Coastal Plan. The County adopted Sonoma County General Plan 2020 on September 23, 2008. Accordingly, the Local Coastal Plan Update incorporates applicable General Plan 2020 goals, objectives, and policies; and includes objectives and policies unique to the Coastal Zone and the larger Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin Planning Area. As mentioned above, the Local Coastal Plan Update incorporates relevant General Plan 2020 goals, objectives, and policies; and includes objectives and policies unique to the Coastal Zone and the larger Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin Planning Area.

3 PLANNING CONTEXT

Sonoma County, the most northerly of the nine counties in the San Francisco Bay Region, is located along the Pacific coastline about forty miles north of San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge. The County is just over 1,500 square miles, making it the largest of the nine Bay Area counties.

Sonoma County is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west; Marin County and San Pablo Bay to the south; Solano, Napa, and Lake Counties to the east; and Mendocino County to the north. Because of the geographic configuration and topography of the North Bay area, transportation linkages to adjacent counties are limited to a few routes. The U.S. Highway 101 freeway is the major north-south route, connecting Sonoma County to San Francisco and Marin Counties in the south and to Mendocino County in the north.

3.1 HISTORY OF THE SONOMA COUNTY COAST

Native American settlement began on the coast of California about 6,000-10,000 years ago. These populations were primarily hunting and gathering tribes, though more recent populations were involved in complex trading systems. The Kashaya Pomo lived on the Russian River and northern coast. The Coast Miwok lived south of the River; their region included portions of present-day southern Sonoma County and Marin County. Both groups occupied a narrow territory extending from the coast several miles inland. The Pomo appear to have had more contact with Russians who settled at Fort Ross in the early 1800's and became somewhat acculturated to European ways. By the 1870's the Pomo survived in three villages. By 1915 a reservation was granted for their permanent residence. The Miwok were subjected to European influence by the San Francisco and Sonoma Missions.

Development and settlement patterns across the Sonoma County Coast were influenced by a variety of groups ranging from Spanish settlers, Mexican residents, Russian traders and various industry activities, such as fishing and logging. The County's coast has changed especially dramatically over the last half century. For example, improvements to State Highway 1, especially north of Jenner, have made travel along the coast less daunting. The State of California and County of Sonoma have also preserved large portions of the coastline for parks and recreation - Sonoma Coast State Park (and beaches), Salt Point State Park, and Fort Ross State Historic Park; and Gualala Point Regional Park and Stillwater Cove Regional Park, respectively. These parks plus development of private visitor-serving facilities have attracted more tourists to the coast over the years. Several private residential developments including Timber Cove (1961), The Sea Ranch (1964) and Bodega Harbor (1971) have increased the resident population and options for vacationers. As these communities have grown, the Sonoma County coast has gradually evolved an economy based primarily on recreation and tourism, although logging and fishing are still important activities.

3.2 COASTAL ZONE BOUNDARY

The Coastal Zone is defined in Coastal Act section 30103, and its boundaries were further established through maps adopted by the State Legislature in 1976, at the time of Coastal Act enactment. Per the Coastal Act, the Coastal Zone includes land and water of the State of California, from the Oregon to the Mexico border. The Coastal Zone extends seaward to the State's outer limit of jurisdiction, including all offshore islands, and inland generally 1,000 yards. However, in significant coastal estuarine, habitat, and recreational areas it extends inland to the first major ridgeline paralleling the sea or five miles from the mean high tide line of the sea, whichever is less, and in developed urban areas the zone generally extends inland less than 1,000 yards. Along Sonoma County's 55-mile coast, the Coastal Zone extends inland generally between 3,000 and 12,000 feet from the shoreline, except around Duncans Mills, Willow Creek, and Valley Ford, where it extends up to five miles inland along the Russian River corridor and the Estero Americano.

3.3 PLANNING AREAS

The Coastal Zone is sparsely populated compared to the rest of the County, due to its relative remoteness and inaccessibility. The Land Use Element of General Plan 2020 projects 3,283 new

residents for the Sonoma Coast / Gualala Basin Planning Area, which encompasses the Coastal Zone. Table C-LU-1 lists the 2010 population of nine communities in the Coastal Zone.

Table C-INT-1. Population of the Nine Coastal Zone Communities

<i>Community</i>	<i>2010 Population¹</i>
Bodega Bay	1,077
Carmet	47
Duncans Mills	175 ²
Jenner	136
Salmon Creek	86
Sereno Del Mar	126
The Sea Ranch	1,305
Timber Cove	164
Valley Ford	147
Estimated Population Outside Community Boundaries	122
Total	3,385
Notes:	
¹ 2010 Census	
² 2000 Census (only available data)	

The Local Coastal Plan covers the area referred to in the Sonoma County General Plan as the Sonoma Coast/Gualala Basin Planning Area. The Planning Area runs the length of the Pacific Coast margin, from the Gualala River to the Estero Americano. The Planning Area has been divided into the following ten SubAreas for ease of mapping:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. The Sea Ranch North | 6. The High Cliffs/Muniz-Jenner |
| 2. The Sea Ranch South | 7. Duncans Mills |
| 3. Stewarts Point/Horseshoe Cove | 8. Pacific View/Willow Creek |
| 4. Salt Point | 9. State Beach/Bodega Bay |
| 5. Timber Cove/Fort Ross | 10. Valley Ford |

4 PLAN ORGANIZATION

4.1 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND OTHER INITIATIVES

Goals are general guidelines that explain what the County seeks to achieve through Local Coastal Plan implementation. Objectives set forth strategies or implementation measures to help attain the stated goals. Policies bind the County’s actions and establish the standards of review for determining whether land use and development decisions, zoning changes, or other County actions are consistent with the Local Coastal Plan. Programs are necessary or potential steps for implementation of the Local Coastal Program; for example, further study and development of plans of ordinances. This Local Coastal Plan includes “Other Initiatives,” which are non-binding and/or advisory statements of intent, encouragement, or pledges of support for specific endeavors, programs, or outcomes; and which may set guidelines and priorities for County actions.

This Local Coastal Plan incorporates General Plan 2020 goals, objectives, and policies applicable to the Coastal Zone; and incorporates as policies many of the previous Local Coastal Plan’s

recommendations. The Local Coastal Plan also includes new policies based on the requirements and recommendations of the California Coastal Commission, new data and information, and public input. After each policy is a term in parenthesis that describes where it comes from and whether it has been revised:

GP2020	the policy is the same as in General Plan 2020
GP2020 Revised	the policy in General Plan 2020 has been revised
Existing LCP	the policy is the same as the Recommendation in the Existing Local Coastal Plan
Existing LCP Revised	the policy (Recommendation) in the Existing Local Coastal Plan has been revised
New	the policy is new
Coastal Commission	the policy is developed from published guidance provided by the Coastal Commission

4.2 PLAN ELEMENTS

This Local Coastal Plan is divided into elements, each of which corresponds to a planning theme or resource topic. A summary of each plan element is provided below. The elements are presented in the order of appearance within the Local Coastal Plan.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element establishes allowed land uses and densities, and presents policies specific to the Coast or particular sub-areas. Policies address outer continental shelf development, new residential and commercial development, affordable housing, and visitor-serving commercial uses.

Agricultural Resources Element

The Agricultural Resources Element presents guidelines and policies that apply to lands with an Agriculture land use designation. Policies address marketing of agricultural products, stabilization of agricultural use at the edge of urban areas, limitations on intrusion of residential uses, location of agricultural-serving and visitor-serving uses, provision of farmworker housing, streamlining of permit procedures for agricultural uses, and recognition of the aquaculture and horse industries as agricultural uses.

Open Space and Resource Conservation Element

The Open Space and Resource Conservation Element addresses scenic resources/design, biotic resources, soils, timber resources, mineral resources, energy resources, air quality, and commercial fishing and support facilities. This element also contains a Scenic Resources / Design section, which identifies designated Scenic Landscape Units, Vista Points, and Scenic Corridors. Along with Coastal Design Guidelines, this section establishes siting and design guidelines to protect coastal views and to minimize other visual impacts of development.

This element also identifies designated Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs), which include Riparian Corridors, and Biotic Habitat Areas, which include Sensitive Natural Communities and Special Status Animal and Plant Occurrences and Habitats. Policies address the protection and preservation of natural resources (including soils, timber resources, mineral resources, energy resources, and air quality) and the protection and improvement of facilities natural resources associated with the commercial fishing industry.

Public Access Element

The California Constitution provides that the public has the right-of-way to navigable waters and right to maximum access of the shoreline, and that development shall not interfere with that right. Recreation and visitor-serving uses over have priority over all other uses except coastal-dependent industry and agriculture.

This element describes in general the public and private parks, trails, and other recreational facilities on the Sonoma County Coast and includes maps showing the locations of these facilities.

The element describes the types of facilities in the Coastal Zone, the methods and priorities for acquisition of facilities, the Public Access Plan, and the allowable uses of public access facilities. This element also contains policies relevant to recreational boating facilities.

Water Resources Element

Water Resources is a new element developed in recognition of the importance of water to the environment, economic stability, agricultural protection, and overall quality of life of Sonoma County Coast residents. Policies address subjects such as surface water, groundwater, water conservation and re-use, public water systems, and water quality.

Public Safety Element

The Public Safety Element establishes special limitations and procedures for review of development projects located in areas subject to natural hazards, including seismic and other geologic hazards, landslide and erosion on unstable slopes, beach erosion and cliff/bluff stability, flooding, sea level rise, tsunami, and wildland fire. Hazardous materials are also addressed.

Circulation and Transit Element

This element presents plans for the Sonoma County Coast's future highway and transit systems are presented, with emphasis on State Route 1. This element emphasizes an increased role for public transit and other alternative transportation modes and the importance of measures which will allocate existing highway capacity more efficiently during peak travel periods.

Public Facilities and Services Element

The various public facilities and services which may affect the future development of land on the Sonoma County Coast are described in this element, including water, wastewater treatment and disposal, parks and recreation, fire protection, law enforcement, and solid waste management. Policies address the lack of basic services on the Coast, which limits development potential in most areas. Policies also address limitations to emergency medical and other health care services for the

Coast’s small population spread over large distances. Policies related to youth, family, and senior services are also included.

Cultural and Historic Resources Element

Cultural and Historic Resources is a new element developed in recognition of the rich cultural history and significant archaeological and paleontological resources, as well as historic structures and sites, contained in the Sonoma County Coastal Zone. This element provides policies for protection and enhancement of Sonoma County cultural and historic resources within the Coastal Zone.

4.3 CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS PLAN

Table C-INT-2 shows the chapters and sections of the previous Local Coastal Plan which correspond to the elements of this updated Local Coastal Plan. Chapters and sections of the previous Local Coastal Plan may correspond to multiple elements in the updated plan, and are shown below. For example, the Land Use Section of the Development Chapter in the previous Local Coastal Plan corresponds mainly to the Land Use Element but also to the Public Facilities and Services, Open Space and Resource Conservation, and Public Access Elements of this Local Coastal Plan Update.

Table C-INT-2. Correspondence of Previous Local Coastal Plan Chapters and Sections with Local Coastal Plan Update Elements

<i>Previous Local Coastal Plan Chapter - Section</i>	<i>Local Coastal Plan Update Element(s) (primary Element - bold)</i>
Development - Land Use	Land Use Public Facilities and Services Open Space and Resource Conservation Public Access
Development - Public Services	Public Facilities and Services Water Resources
Development - Transportation	Circulation and Transit
Development - Visual Resources	Open Space and Resource Conservation
Environment - Environmental Hazards	Public Safety Water Resources
Environment - Environmental Resources	Open Space and Resource Conservation
Harbor	Open Space and Resource Conservation Public Access
Historic Resources	Cultural and Historic Resources Element
Recreation	Public Access
Resources	Open Space and Resource Conservation Agricultural Resources Water Resources Land Use Public Safety

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Sonoma County citizens have played a pivotal role in the establishment of the California Coastal Commission, and have been historical leaders in coastal protection. Accordingly, the Local Coastal Planning process included strong citizen participation from the beginning.

Throughout the Local Coastal Plan Update process, there has been strong public participation. The County held three public workshops in spring 2013 as part of the initial plan update process. The Preliminary Draft Local Coastal Plan was published in June 2015, and five additional public workshops were held during the summer of 2015. After integrating community feedback, the Public Review Draft was published in September 2019, with six public workshops to introduce the plan beginning in fall 2019 and finishing in early 2020. Two workshop style informational updates were presented before the Board of Supervisors and in 2021 four topic specific workshops were held virtually to discuss some major topics of public comment. These workshops and review periods have generated over 400 comments from hundreds of individuals, interest groups, agencies, and research organizations. Below are some of the key agencies, advocacy groups, and coastal community partners who have been instrumental in the development of the Local Coastal Plan Update.

Key Organizations that have been actively involved in coastal protection in Sonoma County since 1968 include:

- Sonoma Land Trust
- Coastwalk California
- Bodega Land Trust
- LandPaths
- Save Penny Island
- Sierra Club
- Sonoma County Conservation Action
- Sonoma County Surfriders
- Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods
- Wildlands Trust
- Save the Redwoods League

Agencies providing ongoing participation in the update and implementation of the Local Coastal Program:

- California Coastal Commission
- CSAC / Cal Cities Sea Level Rise Working Group
- NOAA, Greater Farallones Coastal Resilience Working Group
- Caltrans
- Calfire
- California State Parks
- State Lands Commission
- Coastal Conservancy
- U.C. Davis Bodega Marine Lab
- Audubon Canyon Ranch
- Wildlands Institute
- Sonoma County Ag Commissioner
- Sonoma County Regional Parks
- Sonoma County Ag + Open Space District
- Sonoma County Transit
- SCTA/RCPA
- Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works
- Sonoma County General Services
- Sonoma Water
- Marin County Planning Department
- ABAG/MTC
- Bodega Bay Fire Protection District
- Monte Rio Fire Protection District
- Timber Cove Fire Protection District
- Valley Ford Fire Protection District
- North Coast Fire Protection District

Home Owners Associations that have been actively involved in the development of the Local Coastal Program:

- The Sea Ranch Association
- Bodega Harbour Homeowners Association
- Timber Cove Home Owners Association

- Sereno del Mar Home Owners Association

Advocacy and Community Groups that have been actively involved in the update process:

- Farm Bureau
- Coastwalk
- Surfrider
- Sonoma County Conservation Action
- Greenbelt Alliance
- Sonoma County Land Use and Transportation Coalition
- Save Our Sonoma Coast
- North Bay Association of Realtors
- Wildlands Institute
- LandPaths
- Sonoma County Land Trust
- Russian River Keeper