


Agenda Report Reviewed by:
City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Meeting Date: September 21, 2021
To: Honorable Mayor and Honorable City Councilmembers
From: Mayor Glass
City Administration/Planning Director
Subject: Local Coastal Plan
Recommendation: Authorization for Mayor to send letter to County
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No X N/A
Net General Fund Cost:
Amount: \$ _____

Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) AK (verified by Administrative Services Department)

PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION: This item requests that the City Council Approve Authorization for the Mayor to send a letter to the County regarding potential impacts and City concerns of the draft Local Coastal Plan on the City of Sebastopol.

BACKGROUND:
The California Coastal Act requires each local government lying, in whole or in part, within the Coastal Zone to prepare a “Local Coastal Program” for that portion of the Coastal Zone within its jurisdiction. Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) are basic planning tools used by local governments to guide development in the Coastal Zone, in partnership with the Coastal Commission. LCPs contain the ground rules for future development and protection of coastal resources. The LCPs specify the appropriate type, location, and scale of uses of land and water and applicable resource protection and development policies. Each LCP includes a “Land Use Plan” (LUP) and an “Implementation Plan” (IP) setting forth measures to implement the plan (such as zoning or ordinances). Prepared by local government, these programs govern decisions that determine the short-term and long-term conservation and use of coastal resources. 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.

DISCUSSION:
Permit Sonoma, Sonoma County’s land use and resource management department, released a draft Local Coastal Plan (LCP) for public review, and is currently working with its Planning Commission on the public review of this plan. The LCP regulates land use, protects coastal resources, and guides coastal development. The Plan serves as the fundamental Land Use Plan on the Coast, functionally similar to the inland General Plan. The Local Coastal Plan does not become effective until certified by the California Coastal Commission.

Since the release of the draft, City officials have been contacted with concerns regarding the Plan. Concerns with water, tourism, increase in vacation or short-term rentals, traffic impacts, and greenhouse gas emissions, are just a few of the concerns that need to be further analyzed in the Plan. Coastal planning affects Sonoma County regionally, and, as such, the Plan should address those impacts and issues submitted to Permit Sonoma.

Because the City of Sebastopol is the gateway to coastal Sonoma County, the policies and future plans contained in the LCP affect it more than other Cities in the County, These include:

- Growth, population density, public events and intense tourism in coastal areas impact traffic in Sebastopol since a significant amount of coastal traffic must go through Sebastopol to access the coast. Not only does this impact our infrastructure, but with additional traffic creating traffic congestion, could impede any evacuation routes needed during an emergency, such as evacuations fire, flood, etc.
- Short term rentals (Air B&B, VRBO) in the coastal zone impact the availability of housing, housing affordability, and traffic, regionally. With the recent fire devastation, housing has become even more critical and coastal short term rentals can add to the high cost of rents or prices of houses. Sebastopol strives to maintain and preserve existing housing resources, including both affordable and market rate units.
- Intensification of land uses in the coastal zone, including large scale tourism and wineries, where water resources are known to be scarce, and especially during droughts, will affect the quantity of water available at the coast. This may impact demand for water sales by the City of Sebastopol to potable water haulers.
- A significant percentage of emergency calls to the Bodega Bay Fire District are tourism related. Large events and intense tourism may impact Sebastopol's Fire Department with demands for service related to the City's reciprocal aid agreements. Traffic congestion could lead to delayed response time to the emergency call or delayed response time in getting the injured party to medical facilities.
- The coast is a recreational resource for residents of Sebastopol. Intense use at the coast will overburden narrow winding roads, increasing danger to residents when they go to enjoy coastal recreation, as well as burdening emergency health services. Intense use also leads to more cars on the road which goes against the City's firm commitment to climate action planning. Bike trails for pedestrians and cyclists, and increased public transit would alleviate congestion as well as wear and tear on infrastructure.

These issues, and many more, have been raised by the Bodega Bay Fire Protection District, the Coastal Municipal Advisory Council (MAC), coastal advocacy groups and coastal residents. These groups have expressed their concern to Permit Sonoma, that the current draft LCP does not adequately address these impacts and that the draft LCP update provides less protections than the current LCP. The Coastal MAC voted unanimously this week to express their concern to the County that the current draft LCP has not adequately addressed the issues that have been expressed in many public meetings. The Bodega Fire Protection District has also expressed its concerns in a letter to the County (copy attached).

We propose to send a letter to the County expressing the City's concerns. As of the writing of this report, the letter has not been finalized and will be available prior to the meeting.

CITY COUNCIL AND/OR GENERAL PLAN GOALS:

City Council Goal 2 - Maintain, Improve and Invest in the City's Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Streets, Circulation, Parks, Storm Drains and Public Facilities)

Goal 4 - Maintain and Enhance the City of Sebastopol as a Walkable/Bike-able Community and Enhance the City's Commitment to Promotion of our public's health by Creating and Participating in City and Community Programs, Services and Policies.

Goal CSF 6, Policy CSF 6-1: Continue to maximize public participation in local government actions and maintain excellent levels of City government service.

Policy COS 8-2: Coordinate with Sonoma County and nearby cities to implement regional greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction plans and consolidate efforts to reduce GHGs throughout the County.

Action CIR 1a: The City shall cooperate with other jurisdictions in Sonoma County to reduce transportation congestion

Policy CIR 1-14: Maintain and improve critical transportation facilities to provide logical emergency vehicle access and emergency evacuation needs.

Goal CIR 5: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in Order to Reduce Congestion and Help Achieve Regional efforts to Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

Policy COS 8-2: Coordinate with Sonoma County and nearby cities to implement regional greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction plans and consolidate efforts to reduce GHGs throughout the County.

Goal B-2: Sebastopol will strive to maintain and preserve existing housing resources, including both affordable and market rate units.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of this item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with recommended action tonight.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Council authorize the Mayor to send a letter under the Mayor's signature expressing the City's concerns. The letter has not been finalized and will be available prior to the meeting.

Attachment:

Bodega Fire Protection District

Links: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Long-Range-Plans/Local-Coastal-Program/Proposed/>



BODEGA BAY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

P.O. Box 6
510 Highway One
Bodega Bay CA 94923

Committed
to
Safety and Service

June 1, 2021

Via First Class mail and Email PRMD-LCP-Update@sonoma-county.org

Permit Sonoma
Cecily Condon, Lead Planner
Gary Helfrich, Project Planner
PRMD-LCP-Update
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Re: Bodega Bay Fire Protection District comments and concerns
about pending Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan Update

Dear Ms. Condon and Mr. Helfrich:

I am writing to you as the President of the Board of Directors of Bodega Bay Fire Protection District ("District") to share the District's comments and concerns about the pending Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan Update ("LCP"). As you may know, in March of this year, the District proclaimed a Fiscal Emergency due to insufficient funding and staffing, and this letter is intended to highlight the numerous threats that consequently have arisen to the safety of persons, property and the environment in the Coastal Zone covered by the LCP. As presently drafted, the working LCP Public Review Draft neither includes nor addresses the public safety risks that have arisen because of a change of the status quo. The District requests the LCP update include the significant limitations in fire and emergency medical services for the high tourism areas in the nearly 40% of the Sonoma County coast served by the District.

The public safety risks of reduced fire and emergency medical services are greater than the obvious areas wildland fire, ambulance response and general fire prevention and suppression. The District's reduced capabilities have an impact across the entire spectrum of the LCP, including, but not limited to, land use and property development; public access and recreation; transportation; public facilities and services; and protection of resource areas. Until such time as the District Fiscal Emergency is resolved, the public safety response capacity assumptions upon which these LCP elements and related appendices are based must be re-evaluated and updated to reflect the unfortunate reality that the District will be doing less with less.

Administration:	(707) 875-3700	Fax:	(707) 875-2660
Operations:	(707) 875-3001	Fax:	(707) 875-2285

I understand that the Sonoma Coast Municipal Advisory Council and homeowner's association representatives in Bodega Bay are in communication with you regarding their concerns about public safety risks related to LCP issues. This direct communication from the District is intended to highlight the urgency of this situation and offer our assistance and expertise in assess and quantify the implications and impact of reduced District services on activities under the jurisdiction of the LCP and Coastal Commission.

At an LCP stakeholder meeting held at the District in December 2019 to get community input on the potential changes to the plan, the District Assistant Chief made clear to your team of presenters that the District, which provides the safety net for a major portion of the land within the LCP, was underfunded and understaffed. The District requested at that time that the LCP include a robust analysis of the safety needs in the area, as well as a plan for funding these public safety services. At that time, the District had 4 staff on each shift – now staffing is reduced to only 3 personnel. Although things have gotten worse, the LCP does not address this and does not propose the changes necessary to ensure that those who live in or visit the area covered by the LCP are kept safe, primarily by ensuring the public safety agency that protects them remains financially and operationally stable and sustainable. Accordingly, the District believes that the LCP has failed to adequately address the impacts and implications of this significant and ongoing public safety issue and asks that the LCP be revised with an analysis of the safety needs in the area and plan for funding these public safety services.

Thank you for your attention to these issues. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like additional information from the District leadership. We would also welcome a discussion with you at one of our regular Board meetings, which are held at 6:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the District fire station. I look forward to working collaboratively with you and the LCP team.

Sincerely,



Liz Martin
BBFPD Board President

Cc: Supervisor Lynda Hopkins Lynda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org
Sonoma Coast MAC Chair Scott Farmer farmer.cmac@mcn.org
PRMD Director Tennis Wick Tennis.Wick@sonoma-county.org