



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION  
DRIVE, ROOM 102A  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 2/4/2025

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**To:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Permit Sonoma

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Tennis Wick, Director (707) 565-1925

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Fifth

**Title:**

2:15 P.M. - Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan Certification

**Recommended Action:**

Permit Sonoma recommends that the Board of Supervisors (a) acknowledge receipt of the California Coastal Commission's resolution of certification and findings, including Coastal Commission suggested modifications to the adopted Local Coastal Plan; (b) incorporate modifications to the Local Coastal Plan, as conditionally certified by the California Coastal Commission; (c) direct Permit Sonoma staff to update the Coastal Zoning Ordinance and Coastal Administrative Manual to implement the Local Coastal Plan; and (d) agree to issue coastal development permits subject to the certified amended Local Coastal Plan.

**Executive Summary:**

On July 17, 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted a comprehensive update to the Local Coastal Plan for Sonoma County. On November 14, 2024, the California Coastal Commission voted unanimously to approve Sonoma County's Local Coastal Plan (LCP) Update with modifications.

The Board adopted LCP includes refinements in specific areas, particularly related to coastal hazards, sensitive habitats, environmental justice, cultural and tribal cultural resources, agricultural operations, and lower-cost overnight accommodations, as presented by Coastal Commission staff. The Coastal Commission's proposed modifications to the LCP included recommendations from the November 13, 2024, Coastal Commission staff report that addresses and responds to comments and suggestions based on Permit Sonoma staff's input.

The LCP will go into effect and become certified by operation of law, per section 30512 of the Coastal Act, once the Board of Supervisors adopts the LCP as amended by the Coastal Commission. If the Board decides to make any changes to the amended LCP, it will need to return to the Coastal Commission for review and approval before being adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

**Discussion:**

**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. 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 an Implementation Plan. In Sonoma County, the Local Coastal Program consists of three components with the

Local Coastal Plan serving as the Land Use Plan, and Coastal Zoning Ordinance and Coastal Administrative Manual serving as the Implementation Plan.

The Board adopted LCP extends the goals and objectives of Sonoma County's General Plan 2020 into the Coastal Zone. This update addresses all relevant coastal issues, with a focus on new and updated provisions related to climate change and coastal hazards resiliency/adaptation; conservation/protection of coastal ecosystems, water supplies, and agricultural resources; fire hazards and wildfire resiliency; and the significant public recreational access opportunities and public views. The Coastal Commission conditionally certified the Local Coastal Plan subject to recommended changes. If the Board adopts the modifications, the LCP will automatically be certified per the Coastal Act.

### **Coastal Commission Approval**

On November 14, 2024, the California Coastal Commission voted unanimously to certify the Board adopted LCP as being consistent with the Coastal Act, subject to Coastal Commission recommended modifications. The certification will only become effective if the Board adopts the LCP with the recommended modifications.

The recommended modifications include refinements related to coastal hazards, sensitive habitats, environmental justice, cultural and tribal cultural resources, agricultural operations, lower-cost overnight accommodations, and modifications to maps used to illustrate LCP policies. The Coastal Commission's proposed modifications, developed in coordination between Coastal Commission and Permit Sonoma staff, are outlined in Attachment 3 and on the last page of Attachment 4. The LCP will only go into effect (and become "certified" by operation of law, per section 30512 of the Coastal Act) if the Board adopts it exactly as amended by the Coastal Commission. As noted above, if all of the Coastal Commission suggested modifications are not incorporated, the LCP will need to go back to the Coastal Commission before final adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

### **Project History**

The Local Coastal Plan update process has included various public engagement opportunities over the last 11 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.

Permit Sonoma 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 a subsequent resubmittal on April 2, 2024, local Coastal Commission staff provided a second filing letter requesting additional clarifications. On April 19, the Coastal Commission deemed the transmittal package "incomplete" and requested further information. Permit Sonoma submitted the final transmittal package on July 1, 2024. On July 18, 2024, the North Central Coast District Office of the Coastal Commission filed the

proposed Local Coastal Program (LCP) amendment application as complete.

Throughout this process, Permit Sonoma staff worked closely with Coastal Commission staff, and both groups generally agreed on the suggested modifications. The most significant of these modifications pertained to coastal hazards, shoreline protection, habitat buffers, environmental justice, tribal and cultural resources, ongoing agricultural operations, and low-cost overnight accommodations.

On November 14, 2024, the Coastal Commission conditionally certified the Local Coastal Plan if the Board agrees to modifications (Attachment 4). The Coastal Commission's recommended modifications to the LCP included an addendum (Attachment 3), dated November 13, 2024, which addresses and responds to comments and suggestions based on Permit Sonoma staff's recommendations on wildfire hazards, coastal hazards, and agricultural protections as well as updating the maps and figures with the most up-to-date data and statistics.

On December 5, 2024, the Coastal Commission provided a Notification of Action on Local Coastal Program Amendment letter (Attachment 5). This letter formalized the transmittal of the Coastal Commission's resolution of certification and findings pursuant to Section 15344 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. The LCP may take effect once following is completed.

1. The County, by action of the Board of Supervisors: (a) acknowledges receipt of this resolution of certification, including the suggested modifications; (b) accepts and agrees to the modifications and takes whatever formal action is required to satisfy the modifications (e.g., implementation of ordinances); and (c) agrees to issue coastal development permits subject to the certified LCP.
2. The Commission's Executive Director reports to the Commission his/her determination that the County's actions are legally adequate, and the Commission does not object to the Executive Director's determination.
3. Notice of the certification of the LCP amendment is filed with the Secretary of the Resources Agency.

The Coastal Commission's action of conditional certification expires six months from the date of the Commission's action, or on May 14, 2025.

If the Board adopts it exactly as amended by the Coastal Commission, the LCP will go into effect and become certified. Once the LCP is certified, the Coastal Zoning Code and Administrative Manual will be updated to implement the goals, objectives, policies, programs, and initiatives of the LCP.

**Strategic Plan:**

The LCP update supports Climate Action and Resiliency Pillar Goal 1 Objective 2 and 3 with policies that streamline fire fuel management in high fire severity areas of the coast, and Goal 5 Objective 1 with policies that protect natural resources, infrastructure, and development from impacts of sea level rise. The LCP also supports the Resilient Infrastructure Pillar Goal 5 Objective 2 with polies that provide risk assessment for flooding, sea level rise, and tsunami hazards.

**Racial Equity:**

**Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?**

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

On July 17, 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted a comprehensive update to the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan pending certification by the California Coastal Commission.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

None.

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

None.

**Attachments:**

1. Board of Supervisors Resolution Adopted Local Coastal Plan
2. California Coastal Commission Local Coastal Plan Staff Report (November 1, 2024)
3. California Coastal Commission Approved Local Coastal Plan and Addendum showing modifications (November 14, 2024)
4. California Coastal Commission Notification of Action on Local Coastal Program Amendment (December 5, 2024)
5. Exhibit A Approved Local Coastal Plan
6. Exhibit A.1 Figure C-AR-1 Agricultural Resources Map Series
7. Exhibit A.2 Figure C-CT-1 Road and Bikeway Classification Map Series
8. Exhibit A.3 Figure C-LU-1 Land use Map Series
9. Exhibit A.4 Figure C-OSRC-1 Scenic Resource Map Series
10. Exhibit A.5 Figure C-OSRC-2 Study Area Map Series
11. Exhibit A.6 Figure C-PA-1 Public Access Map Series
12. Exhibit A.7 Figure C-PF-1 School District Map Series
13. Exhibit A.8 Figure C-PF-2 Fire District Map Series
14. Exhibit A.9 Figure C-PS-1 Geologic Hazards Map Series
15. Exhibit A.10 Figure C-PS-2 Slope Instability Hazards Map Series
16. Exhibit A.11 Figure C-PS-3 Tsunami Sea Level Rise Flood Hazard Map Series
17. Exhibit A.12 Figure C-PS-4 Coastal Exposure Map Series
18. Exhibit A.13 Figure C-PS-5 Role of Natural Habitat Map Series
19. Exhibit A.14 Figure C-PS-6 Wildland Fire Map Series
20. Exhibit A.15 Figure C-WR-1 Watershed Map Series
21. Exhibit A.16 Figure C-WR-2 Groundwater Map Series
22. Staff PowerPoint Presentation

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**

None.