

# Visual Resources Policy Compendium

## Coastal Land Use Plan Overlay

(Available online @ [http://longrange.sbcountyplanning.org/programs/coastal\\_lup.php](http://longrange.sbcountyplanning.org/programs/coastal_lup.php))

### View Corridor

The view corridor overlay delineates areas where there are views from a principal public road to the ocean and along the coast.

## Land Use Element Policies

(Available online @

<http://longrange.sbcountyplanning.org/programs/genplanreformat/PDFdocs/LandUseElement.pdf>)

### Visual Resources Policies

1. All commercial, industrial, and planned developments, shall be required to submit a landscaping plan to the County for approval.
2. In areas designated as rural on the land use plan maps, the height, scale, and design of structures shall be compatible with the character of the surrounding natural environment, except where technical requirements dictate otherwise. Structures shall be subordinate in appearance to natural landforms; shall be designed to follow the natural contours of the landscape; and shall be sited so as not to intrude into the skyline as seen from public viewing places.
4. Signs shall be of size, location, and appearance so as not to detract from scenic areas or views from public roads and other viewing points.
5. Utilities, including television, shall be placed underground in new developments in accordance with the rules and regulations of the California Public Utilities Commission, except where cost of undergrounding would be so high as to deny service.

### Hillside and Watershed Protection Policies

1. Plans for development shall minimize cut and fill operations. Plans requiring excessive cutting and filling may be denied if it is determined that the development could be carried out with less alteration of the natural terrain.
2. All developments shall be designed to fit the site topography, soils, geology, hydrology, and any other existing conditions and be oriented so that grading and other site preparation is kept to an absolute minimum. Natural features, landforms, and native vegetation, such as trees, shall be preserved to the maximum extent feasible. Areas of the site which are not suited to development because of known soil, geologic, flood, erosion or other hazards shall remain in open space.

## **Coastal Land Use Plan Policies**

(Available online @ [http://longrange.sbcountyplanning.org/programs/coastal\\_lup.php](http://longrange.sbcountyplanning.org/programs/coastal_lup.php))

### **Seawalls and Shoreline Structures**

Policy 3-1: Seawalls shall not be permitted unless the County has determined that there are no other less environmentally damaging alternatives reasonably available for protection of existing principal structures. The County prefers and encourages nonstructural solutions to shoreline erosion problems, including beach replenishment, removal of endangered structures and prevention of land divisions on shorefront property subject to erosion; and, will seek solutions to shoreline hazards on a larger geographic basis than a single lot circumstance. Where permitted, seawall design and construction shall respect to the degree possible natural landforms. Adequate provision for lateral beach access shall be made and the project shall be designed to minimize visual impacts by the use of appropriate colors and materials.

### **Hillside and Watershed Protection**

Policy 3-13: Plans for development shall minimize cut and fill operations. Plans requiring excessive cutting and filling may be denied if it is determined that the development could be carried out with less alteration of the natural terrain.

Policy 3-14: All development shall be designed to fit the site topography, soils, geology, hydrology, and any other existing conditions and be oriented so that grading and other site preparation is kept to an absolute minimum. Natural features, landforms, and native vegetation, such as trees, shall be preserved to the maximum extent feasible. Areas of the site which are not suited for development because of known soil, geologic, flood, erosion or other hazards shall remain in open space.

### **Visual Resources**

Policy 4-1: Areas within the coastal zone which are now required to obtain approval from the County Board of Architectural Review, because of the requirements of the "D"- Design Supervision Combining Regulations or because they are within the boundaries of Ordinance #453, shall continue to be subject to design review. In addition, developments in all areas designated on the land use plan maps as Commercial, Industrial, or Planned Development and residential structures on bluff top lots shall be required to obtain plan approval from the County BAR.

Policy 4-2: All commercial, industrial, planned development, and greenhouse projects shall be required to submit a landscaping plan to the County for approval.

Policy 4-3: In areas designated as rural on the land use plan maps, the height, scale, and design of structures shall be compatible with the character of the surrounding natural environment, except where technical requirements dictate otherwise. Structures shall be subordinate in appearance to natural landforms; shall be designed to follow the natural contours of the landscape; and shall be sited so as not to intrude into the skyline as seen from public viewing places.

Policy 4-5: In addition to that required for safety (see Policy 3-4), further bluff setbacks may be required for oceanfront structures to minimize or avoid impacts on public views from the beach. Bluff top structures shall be set back from the bluff edge sufficiently far to insure that the structure does not infringe on views from the beach except in areas where existing structures on both sides of the proposed structure already impact public views from the beach. In such cases, the new structure shall be located no closer to the bluff's edge than the adjacent structures.

Policy 4-6: Signs shall be of size, location, and appearance so as not to detract from scenic areas or views from public roads and other viewing points.

Policy 4-7: Utilities, including television, shall be placed underground in new developments in accordance with the rules and regulations of the California Public Utilities Commission, except where cost of undergrounding would be so high as to deny service.

Policy 4-8: The County shall request the State of California to designate that portion of Highway 101 between Winchester Canyon and Gaviota State Park as a “Scenic Highway.”

### **View Corridor Overlay Designation**

Policy 4-9: Structures shall be sited and designed to preserve unobstructed broad views of the ocean from Highway #101, and shall be clustered to the maximum extent feasible.

Policy 4-10: A landscaping plan shall be submitted to the County for approval. Landscaping when mature, shall not impede public views.

Policy 4-11: Building height shall not exceed one story or 15 feet above average finished grade, unless an increase in height would facilitate clustering of development and result in greater view protection, or a height in excess of 15 feet would not impact public views to the ocean.

### **Other Coastal Facilities**

Policy 6-26: Aquaculture facilities located in areas designated as rural on the land use plan maps shall be sited and designed to be compatible with the natural surroundings. To minimize impacts on coastal visual resources, structures shall be well-screened, and depressed below grade when feasible. Intake and outfall lines for ocean water shall be underground unless not feasible for a particular operation, i.e., salmon culture. If aboveground channels or pipes are necessary, adequate provisions for lateral beach access shall be required.

### **Coastal Dependent and Related Recreational Activities**

Policy 7-13: In order to protect natural and visual resources of the coastal zone between Ellwood and Gaviota, development of recreational facilities shall not impede views between U.S. 101 and the ocean, shall minimize grading, removal of vegetation, and paving, and be compatible with the rural character of the area. Existing natural features shall remain undisturbed to the maximum extent possible, and landscaping shall consist of drought-tolerant species.

Policy 7-29: Visitor-serving commercial recreational development in rural areas should be limited to low intensity uses, i.e., campgrounds, that are designed to protect and enhance visual resources, and minimize impacts on topography, habitats, and water resources.

Policy 8-7: Landscaping and screening shall be installed within six months of completion of new greenhouses and/or accessory buildings. Such landscaping shall reasonably block the view of greenhouse structures and parking areas from the nearest public road(s) within five years of project completion.

## Scenic Highways Element Goals

(Available online @

[http://longrange.sbcountyplanning.org/programs/scenichighways/scenic\\_element.php](http://longrange.sbcountyplanning.org/programs/scenichighways/scenic_element.php))

The County seeks to attain the following goals through the adoption and implementation of this Scenic Highway Element:

- a) To enhance and preserve the valuable scenic resources located along roadways within the County,
- b) To consider every proposed new highway or major realignment as an opportunity to maintain the scenic quality of the County by evaluating them for scenic highway eligibility,
- c) To help maintain the economic contribution of tourism to the County,
- d) To accommodate State planning law.

## Land Use and Development Code (LUDC)

(Available online @ <http://www.sbcountyplanning.org/forms/index.cfm>)

### **Design Control (D) Overlay Zone (35.28.080)**(not currently applicable on the Gaviota Coast)

**Purpose and intent.** The Design Control (D) overlay zone is applied where, because of visual resources and/or unique neighborhood characteristics, plans for new or altered structures require Design Review. The intent is to ensure well designed development and to protect scenic qualities, property values, and neighborhood character.

### **Ridgeline and Hillside Development Guidelines (35.62.040)**(applicability is site specific)

**Purpose and intent.** This section provides for the visual protection of the County's ridgelines and hillsides by requiring that the Board of Architectural Review evaluate each proposed structure within the (applicable) areas. The intent of this Section is to encourage architectural designs and landscaping that conform to the natural topography on hillsides and ridgelines.

**Applicability.** Each structure proposed where there is a 16 drop in elevation within 100 feet in any direction from the proposed building footprint shall be subject to Design Review.

**Development Guidelines.** The following guidelines shall apply within Rural, Inner Rural, Existing Developed Rural Neighborhood (Inland area) and Rural Neighborhood (Coastal Zone) areas as designated on the Comprehensive Plan maps.

- (1) The height of any structure should not exceed 16 feet wherever there is a 16 foot drop in elevation within 100 feet of the location of the proposed structure's location.
- (2) Building rake and ridge line should conform to or reflect the surrounding terrain.
- (3) Materials and colors should be compatible with the character of the terrain and natural surroundings of the site.
- (4) Large, visually unbroken and/or exposed retaining walls should be minimized.
- (5) Landscaping should be used to integrate the structure into the hillside, and shall be compatible with the adjacent vegetation.
- (6) Grading shall be minimized, in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.
- (7) Development on ridgelines shall be discouraged if suitable alternative locations are available on the lot.

## Article II (Coastal Zoning Ordinance)

(Available online @ <http://www.sbcountyplanning.org/forms/index.cfm>)

### Gaviota Coast Planning Area (35-66)

1. In order to protect natural and visual resources of the Coastal Zone between Ellwood and Gaviota, development of recreational facilities shall not impede views between U. S. Highway 101 and the ocean, shall minimize grading, removal of vegetation, and paving, and be compatible with the rural character of the area. Existing natural features shall remain undisturbed to the maximum extent possible, and landscaping shall consist of drought-tolerant species.

### Bluff Development (35-67)

2. In addition to that required for safety, further bluff setbacks may be required for oceanfront structures to minimize or avoid impacts on public views from the beach. Blufftop structures shall be set back from the bluff edge sufficiently far to insure that the structure does not infringe on views from the beach except in areas where existing structures on both sides of the proposed structure already impact public views from the beach. In such cases, the new structure shall be located no closer to the bluff's edge than the adjacent structures.

### View Corridor Overlay District (VC)

**Purpose and Intent.** The purpose of this overlay district is to protect significant coastal view corridors from U. S. 101 to the ocean in areas of the County where such view corridors currently exist.

**Processing.** Any structural development in areas within the View Corridor Overlay district shall be subject to approval by the Board of Architectural Review prior to issuance of a Coastal Development Permit.

**Standards.** The Board of Architectural Review shall approve the plans if it finds conformance with the following standards:

- a. Structures shall be sited and designed to preserve unobstructed broad views of the ocean from Highway 101, and shall be clustered to the maximum extent feasible.
- b. Building height shall not exceed 15 feet above average finished grades, unless an increase in height would facilitate clustering of development and result in greater view protection, or a height in excess of 15 feet would not impact public views to the ocean, in which case the height limitations of the base zone district shall apply.
- c. Structures shall not be of an unsightly or undesirable appearance.

### D - Design Control Overlay District. (35-98)(not currently applicable on the Gaviota Coast)

**Purpose and Intent.** The purpose of this district is to designate areas where, because of visual resources and/or unique neighborhood characteristics, plans for new or altered structures are subject to design review in compliance with Section 35-184 (Board of Architectural Review). The intent is to ensure well designed developments and to protect scenic qualities, property values, and neighborhood character.

### Ridgeline and Hillside Development Guidelines. (35-144)(applicability is site specific)

**Purpose and Intent.** The purpose of this section is to provide for the visual protection of the County's ridgelines and hillsides by requiring the Board of Architectural Review to review all proposed structures within the (applicable) areas. The intent of this section is to encourage architectural designs and landscaping which conform to the natural topography on hillsides and ridgelines.

**Applicability.** All structures proposed to be constructed in any zone district where there is a 16 foot drop in elevation within 100 feet in any direction from the proposed building footprint shall be subject to design review.

**Development Guidelines.** The following development guidelines shall apply within Rural and Inner-Rural Areas as designated on the Local Coastal Program Maps:

- a. The height of any structure should not exceed 16 feet wherever there is a 16 foot drop in elevation within 100 feet of the proposed structural location.
- b. Building rake and ridge line should conform to or reflect the surrounding terrain.
- c. Materials and colors should be compatible with the character of the terrain and natural surroundings of the site.
- d. Large, visually unbroken and/or exposed retaining walls should be minimized.
- f. Landscaping should be used to integrate the structure into the hillside, and shall be compatible with the adjacent vegetation.
- g. Grading shall be minimized, in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan goals.
- h. Development on ridgelines shall be discouraged if suitable alternative locations are available on the parcel.

**ARC - Agriculture-Residential Cluster Overlay District (35-99)**(available, but not yet applied to any parcels)

**Purpose and Intent.** The purpose of this overlay district is to preserve large non-prime agricultural operations and to avoid subdivision of large ranches down to the specified minimum lot sizes. The intent is to permit residential development at a density greater than that allowed under the existing zoning district while ensuring that such development will be compatible with the long-term preservation of the agricultural operation.

**Affect of ARC Overlay District.** Land zoned ARC must be in large, non-prime agricultural operations of 10,000 acres or more (as described in the Coastal Land Use Plan) in the Gaviota Coast and North Coast planning areas for which the County has not approved land divisions. Within the ARC Overlay District, the permitted and conditionally permitted uses of land and the regulations of the base zone district shall apply as well as the additional permitted uses and regulations of the ARC.

**Preliminary Development Plan to be Included in Application for Rezoning.** Unless the Planning Commission expressly waives the requirement, an application for a rezoning to this overlay district shall include a Preliminary Development Plan as part of the application. Upon approval by the Board of Supervisors of the rezoning and Preliminary Development Plan, the Preliminary Development Plan shall be incorporated into the rezoning ordinance.

**Processing.** No permits for development including grading shall be issued except in conformance with an approved Final Development Plan

### **Additional Permitted Uses.**

1. Residential development at a density greater than that allowed under the base zoning district may be permitted but shall be clustered on no more than two percent of the gross acreage of the property. The maximum density permitted shall be calculated at the rate of one dwelling unit per each two acres included in the two percent area. Residential development up to a maximum of one dwelling unit per each acre included in the two percent area may be permitted provided that the County finds that there is no potential for significant adverse environmental impact with respect to the findings set forth in Section 35-99.6, below. The two percent area is the maximum area that will be permitted to be taken out of agricultural production and committed to residential and related accessory uses. Included in the two percent area calculation are: residential units, new roads (excluding existing paved roads), parking areas, structural coverage for non-agricultural buildings, private open space such as yards or gardens, etc.

2. A minimum of one percent of the gross acreage, including the dry sandy beach, shall be dedicated for public recreation and access and reserved for commercial visitor-serving facilities. Said one percent area shall not be required to be a contiguous area.