

Midcoast Community Council

P.O. Box 64

Moss Beach, CA 94038

(650) 728-2129 (voice and fax)

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February 11, 1998

Mr. Paul M. Koenig, Director of Environmental Services
Planning and Building Division
Hall of Justice and Records
401 Marshall Street
Redwood City, CA 94063

Subject: Substandard Residential Parcels in the Unincorporated Mid-Coast

At its most recent Planning and Zoning Committee meeting, volunteer staff prepared a report that was discussed at the most recent publicly posted and held meeting of the Midcoast Community Council, on February 11, 1998. After the Planning and Zoning presentation and open public discussion, the Midcoast Community Council deliberated and decided unanimously to respond to County planning staff recommendations contained in the February 5, 1998 cover letter and attached staff report on substandard lot development in the urban Mid-Coast dated March 10, 1998. The Midcoast Community Council made the following findings:

1. The County's study of substandard lot development is too narrow in its focus on the S-17 zoned (5,000 square feet) lots and needs to be broadened to include all lots that are substandard within their zoning. In order to obtain an accurate, hard count of the total number of substandard lots that could be permitted development, the following changes need to be made to the scope of the study:
 - a. Include others areas with zonings others than s-17 plus commercial;
 - b. Include Caltrans Right Of Way (ROW) in Urban, Rural Residential, and Rural areas;
 - c. Include unmerged developed lots; and
 - d. Apply current Planning Department practices and precedents to these properties (a through c above) to obtain the actual, on-the-ground potential for development.
2. Until steps listed in 1(a to d) above are followed, the county's proposed strategy for effectively regulating development of substandard lots is flawed.
3. As recently elected representatives of the Mid-Coast community, the members of the Mid-Coast Council currently possess the "significant community support" needed for the establishment of a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) standard and/or related revisions to the zoning regulations to be more restrictive than existing policy. Hence, we formally request technical assistance from the county planning staff to complete establishment of a FAR standard as soon as possible.

4. As recently elected representatives of the Mid-Coast community, the members of the Mid-Coast Council currently possess the "significant community support" needed for the creation of new design review regulations. Hence, we formally request technical assistance from the county planning staff to design and operate such an effort.
5. Until the study is broadened to include the areas requested in paragraph 1, above, completed, analyzed and responded to by our Council, we request a moratorium, effective immediately, on the granting of approval by the county for development on substandard lots, on subdivisions, and on all proposed lot line adjustments that create one or more substandard lots. This moratorium is required because, according to the Coastside County Water District (CCWD), the amount of water currently projected as "available for future use" in the unincorporated midcoast is less than 500 additional new connections. If these are assigned to substandard housing, they effectively foreclose the ability of the unincorporated midcoast to develop land in a way that is more tax-revenue intensive. That result would not be favorable either to the county or to the residents living in the unincorporated midcoast that have expressed a desire for local land use control.
6. We support the basic process proposed by the county for the merging of lots. However, the process needs to include FAR, Lot Coverage, and Setbacks to encourage merger for larger houses and for use of existing single owner substandard lots for affordable housing with consideration for Setbacks matching modular housing sizes.
7. We request a presentation by county staff at a future meeting or workshop to assist the Council and the community in defining and understanding all of the related planning issues clearly in order to offer specific solutions. We need this presentation and additional data to begin working on possible solutions.
8. Given our request for the additional data required in a broader scope of study and a presentation by staff, please reschedule this item to a future date. It is currently pending for a March 10 hearing at the Board of Supervisors. This will give county planning staff the time they will need to complete an accurate count (not formula projection) the actual total number of substandard lots in the unincorporated midcoast. To date, Midcoast Community Council member Paul Perkovic has been instrumental in collaborating with County Planner George Bergman to develop this information and we believe that the most credible result would be obtained through having Mr. Bergman work with him to complete this project. To complete our analysis, this project must produce an accurate hard-count listing of the actual lots, including address, owner, size dimensions, total square footage and APN number. Please send both a computer media copy and a printed hard copy of this property listing to the Midcoast Community Council at least 20 days prior to placing this topic on a future San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meeting agenda.

We appreciate your time and consideration of our requests. As previously discussed and agreed to by planning staff at a recent meeting with staff, Paul Perkovic is ready and willing to sit down with staff to discuss an approach for developing a hard count of the number of substandard lots that will meet the needs of all interested parties.

Sincerely,

David Spiselman
Midcoast Community Council, Chairman

c.c.:

Mr. Terry Burnes, Planning Administrator
Planning and Building Division
Hall of Justice and Records
401 Marshall Street
Redwood City, CA 94063

Supervisor Richard Gordon
Hall of Justice and Records
401 Marshall Street
Redwood City, CA 94063

Mr. Jack Leibster, Coastal Commission
45 Fremont St., Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Mr. Jon Silver, Chairman, Planning Commission
Hall of Justice and Records
401 Marshall Street
Redwood City, CA 94063