

# Midcoast Community Council

*representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar*  
P.O. Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 - [www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org](http://www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org)

Claire Toutant . Len Erickson . Dave Olson . Barbra Mathewson . Dan Haggerty . Tamar Powell . Michelle Weil  
Chair Vice Chair Secretary Treasurer

Date: October 23, 2019

To: Supervisor Don Horsley  
Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director  
Planning Commission

CC: Coastside Design Review Committee (CDRC)  
Camille Leung, Planner

From: Midcoast Community Council/ Claire Toutant, Chair

**Subject: Midcoast Neighborhood Commercial Development Standards, CDRC Purview, and Building Height Method of Measurement.**

**MCC renews our 2017 request for an updated Neighborhood Commercial Zoning Ordinance specific for the Midcoast** to be added to the County's Long-Range Planning Workplan. (See attached 3/22/17 MCC letter.)

**MCC appreciates and supports the efforts of the Coastside Design Review Committee (CDRC)** in their monthly open study sessions (see attached 10/15 Status Report on Phase 1). MCC agrees with CDRC's prioritization of updated neighborhood commercial development standards specific for the Midcoast that are the critical underpinnings for Design Standards which are limited to refining the aesthetics of a project. MCC has provided agenda items to increase public outreach on this issue and a page on the MCC website with background and project study materials.  
<http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/neighborhood-commercial/>

**MCC supports expanding CDRC purview to Midcoast commercial development**, which typically has a larger footprint, massing and higher visibility than residential projects. Existing regulation (§6565.7) only provides for CDRC review of commercial development if it includes a residential component. This arbitrary distinction ignores the obvious -- that the residential component does not usually affect the exterior design of the building. Developers can easily avoid the CDRC public process and increased setback requirements by calling the residential component something else, such as staff office/break room, which has all the components of a one-bedroom manager apartment. It makes sense to provide this type of employee housing on site, but the current regulations discourage it.

**MCC renews our 2017 request to expedite clarification of how building height is measured** as specified in the 11/8/17 MCC letter, in the C-1/S-3, RM/CZ, and PAD zoning districts in the Midcoast LCP Update area.

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**Lisa Ketcham**   **Dave Olson**   **Claire Toutant**   **Laura Stein**   **Dan Haggerty**   **Chris Johnson**   **Brandon Kwan**  
Chair   Vice-Chair   Secretary   Treasurer

Date: March 22, 2017

To: Supervisor Don Horsley  
Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director

Cc: Nancy Cave, CCC North Central Coast District Manager

From: Midcoast Community Council/ Lisa Ketcham, Chair

Subject: **Neighborhood Commercial (C-1/S-3) Zoning Standards for Midcoast**

Recent hotel development proposals for Montara have raised awareness of the development standards included or lacking in the C-1 Zoning Ordinance and S-3 zoning overlay that apply to neighborhood commercial districts in the Midcoast.

The C-1 ordinance is generic, countywide, and appears to date from the 1950's. Custom updates for unincorporated North Fair Oaks (NFO) and West Menlo Park (WMP) were done in the 1990's, but the C-1 for the Midcoast remains basically unchanged. The S-3 overlay adds very little to the C-1 regulations.

- There is no mention of community character or neighborhood scale.
- There are no required setbacks or lot coverage maximum.
- Averaging methods for calculating building height can result in 36-foot roof peak at street front on a mildly sloped lot even though height limit is 28 feet.
- There are no landscaping requirements or screening requirements for outdoor storage or parking.
- There are no performance standards.
- Signage regulations that are needed to preserve our scenic highway are inadequate as to number and size limitation compared with NFO, WMP, and the City of Half Moon Bay. Additional sign standards are provided in the 1976 Community Design Manual, but they are not well known or easy to find.
- Building with no side setbacks, as seen on the western block of Princeton shoreline, results in walling off ocean views, which could occur between Main Street (route of the Coastal Trail) and Highway 1 in Montara.

The C-1 ordinance has no "Purposes" section to provide goals for the uses and development standards included. For Midcoast Neighborhood Commercial Districts, we can look to the Goals and Objectives in the adopted Montara/ Moss Beach/ El Granada Community Plan, incorporated by reference into the LCP:

- 1.2 Encourage good design in new construction which reflects the character, and is compatible with the scale, of the neighborhood in which it is located.

- 2.1 Concentrate commercial activity in established centers to strengthen and enhance the centers as community focal points, and provide separate areas for commercial recreation to serve visitors.
- 2.8 Locate commercial recreation activities in designated areas away from community commercial centers.
- 2.9 Employ the design guidelines of the Community Design Manual in all new commercial development.
- 7.1 Preserve and enhance the visual qualities of the coastal community which give it a unique character and distinguish it from other places.
- 7.2b Maintain the small-town character of the area by preventing construction of massive structures out of scale with the community.

Midcoast neighborhood commercial development standards should better support LCP policies:

- 8.12.b Locate and design new development and landscaping so that ocean views are not blocked from public viewing points such as public roads and publicly-owned lands.
- 8.13.a.4 Design structures that are in scale with the character of their setting and blend rather than dominate or distract from the overall view of the urbanscape.
- 11.4 Permit visitor-serving facilities that ... do not subvert the unique small town, rural character of the individual communities on the Coastsides.

County Parking Ordinance requirements for hotels also appear to date from the 1950's. Required parking space per bedroom is 1:4 for hotels, but 1:1 for motels. This disparity has no apparent rationale in the Midcoast where guests can only realistically arrive by private automobile, and overflow parking will impact the surrounding neighborhood.

Development standards should clearly and simply guide appropriate development that preserves our unique coastal small town character, in order to avoid long and contentious permit approval cycles and appeals. Likely there will be more applications for development in Midcoast neighborhood commercial districts due to new water connections available in Montara and Moss Beach after decades of moratorium. Thriving, attractive, bike/pedestrian-friendly neighborhood commercial districts would improve quality of life, strengthen the local economy, and reduce residents' dependence on highway travel.

There has been consensus during community discussions at MCC meetings on March 8 and 22, that there is a need for an updated Neighborhood Commercial ordinance specific for the Midcoast. MCC urges your support for this.

Thank you for your consideration. Accompanying slide presentation is at the link: <http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/mtgs-com2017/2017-03-22-C1-zoning-MCCattachment.pdf>

## Status Report on the MidCoast C-1 and Design Standards Update Process

Meeting with S. Monowitz and J. Laclair

October 15, 2019

### DRAFT Goals:

#### **PHASE 1**

- Create a separate MidCoast Commercial Zoning District for the areas currently zoned C-1 in El Granada, Moss Beach and Montara, including purposes, performance standards, and permitted uses.
- Building height measurement

#### **PHASE 2**

DRAFT Mission Statement: To establish new and updated design standards for Residential, Multifamily, Mixed-use, Commercial (nonresidential), Commercial- Recreation, Light-Industrial, Agricultural (near residential), Planned Unit Development (PUD), and El Granada Gateway development, that complements state regulations, area character and the surrounding natural setting to have a more harmonious Coastside community design aesthetic.

- Expand the CDRC's purview to non-residential structures in the Midcoast (e.g., Commercial, Industrial)
- Combine and update residential and commercial design review standards, including those regulating:
  - Building styles
  - Landscape standards
  - Site design standards
- Update CDRC operational procedures

**PHASE 1 Products:** APPROACH: Comparison of C-1, CCR, WMP, NMU, plus CDRC and public feedback

1. Uses Permitted and Definitions
  - a. Comparison Table of Allowed Uses: C-1, CCR, WMP, NMU
  - b. Survey of Existing Businesses
2. Performance Standards
  - a. Comparison of CCR and NMU (most up to date)
3. Purposes
  - a. Comparison of Mon-MB-EG Community Plan and LCP Policy
4. Development Standards – *Currently being discussed*
  - a. Comparison of C-1, CCR, and R-1/S-17

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Date: November 8, 2017  
To: Supervisor Don Horsley  
Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director  
From: Midcoast Community Council/ Lisa Ketcham, Chair  
Subject: **Method of Measurement of Building Height in Midcoast Zoning Districts**

The Board of Supervisors adopted a Mobilehome Park (MH) Zoning District Ordinance on 9/26/2017, and directed staff to return with a subsequent amendment, prior to submittal to the Coastal Commission for certification, amending the maximum building height in the Coastal Zone to 28 feet, and

***defining building height as being measured from the lower of natural or finished grade to the topmost point of the building immediately above.***

This definition was requested by MCC and is the same one included in the 2017 Second Unit Ordinance.

The 2012 Midcoast LCP update neglected to include this critical definition when maximum building height was lowered to 28 feet in C-1/S-3, RM-CZ, and PAD zoning districts. If the method of building height measurement is not defined in the zoning district ordinance, the County applies a default averaging method of roof height and finished grade, and ignores natural or existing grade. The averaging method allows significantly higher buildings, as we have recently seen in Montara hotel plans (C-1/S-3) and Vallemar Bluff houses (RM-CZ).

MCC urges the County to expedite correction of this deficiency in the C-1/S-3, RM-CZ, and PAD, together with the same amendment planned for the MH district.

Thank you for your consideration.