

**From:** [Laura Morgan](#)  
**To:** [PlanningAgency](#); [Eric Koenigshofer](#); [Caitlin Cornwall](#); [Jacquelynne Ocana](#); [kevin.deas@deasproperties.com](mailto:kevin.deas@deasproperties.com); [Larry Reed](#)  
**Cc:** [Tennis Wick](#); [Peter@Coastal Benham](mailto:Peter@Coastal Benham)  
**Subject:** Save the Sonoma Coast's Land Use Element recommended Policy  
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**Attachments:** [Development of the Urban Fringe.docx](#)

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## EXTERNAL

Thanks for noting and adding this for the Planning Commission's consideration.

Laura Morgan, for *Save the Sonoma Coast*.

Land Use Policy Recommendations (exclusive of Appendices, Maps:  
General Administrative Policy:

- 1) Policy C-LU-: Public, MAC and California Coastal Commission shall be simultaneously noticed at least 2 weeks prior to Permit Sonoma approval of Use Permits (including construction of private roads) amending the LCP and/or Coastal Act, including proposals for Principally Permitted Use;
- 2) Policy C-LU-: Public, MAC, and California Coastal Commission shall be simultaneously noticed 2 weeks prior to Permit Sonoma approval of Zoning changes related to Use Permits amending the LCP and/or Coastal Act;
- 3) Policy C-LU-: Permit Sonoma intent to issue Coastal Permits shall be simultaneously noticed to the Public and California Coastal Commission at least 2 weeks in advance of planned issue date;
- 4) Policy C-LU-: Permit Sonoma shall verify ownership of property prior to accepting applications for Use Permits;

General Land Use Policy

- 1) Policy C-LU-:) New development, including roadways, Planned Communities and land divisions for non-priority uses shall be prohibited in areas of water scarcity, ESHA or future potential ESHA, lack of adequate retreat corridors for animals and people, etc.);
- 2) Policy C-LU-:) Clearing of vegetation, grading, excavation, fill or construction, even for resource-dependent uses, shall be prohibited in Coastal Zone ESHA unless necessary for defensible space;
- 3) Policy C-LU-:) Urban and Commercial Service Area Boundaries shall be established at the current periphery of those existing areas and not expanded further;

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- 4) Open Space shall remain non-commercialized, unbuilt, and conserved for habitat and low-impact daytime public access on formally established trails;
- 5) Timberlands shall be maintained in 640 acre parcels, with a single residence per each 160 acres and shall not be converted to agricultural, recreational or tourism-serving purposes;
- 6) Rural residential property shall not be commercialized for the purposes of agricultural production, private recreational facilities or visitor tourism purposes;
- 7) Adequate sewage and water service capacities for “Moderate and Low Income Housing” shall be assessed prior to construction, including their sustainability for the life of the development.
- 8) Diverse Agriculture Land shall be maintained as purely agricultural and not converted to commercial or visitor-serving uses;
- 9) Affordable housing units shall comprise at least 50% of all new development;
- 10) New housing shall be allowed only in areas where adequate public water and sewage are available and proven sustainable through their lifetime through valid, impartial flow and perc measurements;
- 11) New well drilling shall first take into account groundwater aquifer capacity and recharge and be limited to existing rural residential, public facility, agricultural, commercial and urban areas.

# Parcel-Loading As Fringe Development

By Ernie Carpenter, Sebastopol, Ca.

Since adoption of the 1978 General Plan (GP), Sonoma County has planned for community-centered growth. Development has been directed to communities that have sewer and water. The cities take most of the County's growth. During the 1980s, this was planned between Supervisors, City Councils and citizens. The Association of Bay Area Governments allowed County housing shares to be directed to cities instead of subdividing farmland.

The idea was to save large lots for agriculture and to relieve the costly stresses of urban growth. When the apple industry folded, apple farmers expected to cut their land into five-acre parcels as a retirement plan. The County preserved this agricultural land through large lot zoning. This is also true of forested land. This strategy worked to preserve the land for open space and agriculture. An important tool was the creation of Burbank Housing to build affordable housing for the lower end of the economic spectrum. Unfortunately, the Supervisors have under-utilized and under-funded Burbank Housing.

Fringe development has taken on new meaning in Sonoma County. "Leapfrog" development and small parcels are less of a growth issue. Fringe development looks like huge corporate-owned wine processing facilities, with restaurant and curlicue stores added. There is a various assortment of housing now allowed by the County Supervisors on each parcel. This not only impacts services, habitat, and creates greater traffic, it is costly to the government. We now have housing complexes in agricultural zoning due to parcel loading.

There is gentrification in Sonoma County, just like in well-studied West Marin. Fewer locals can afford new rural housing. Real estate is not geared to the service or agriculture worker but toward people leaving the City and the well-heeled. The Board believes they can "build their way out of this housing crisis". Will not happen on twenty-bucks-an-hour wages. Universities and high schools are now trying to pay for housing for teachers. Fringe housing leads to more gentrification and solves nothing.

Sprawl costs are well documented. Sonoma County maintains double the miles of public roads as any comparable-sized County. The Board did not recognize water-scarce areas, fire-prone areas nor dispersed service costs in the densification of properties. When services are dispersed, law enforcement and firefighting costs go up. Every year the Board fights the financial cost of increasing the Sheriff's patrol. The stress on fire services are well-documented. Given the yearly wildfires, it hardly makes sense to disperse housing in forested areas. The Board did not create an exception in forested area for parcel loading. They resisted California Department of Forestry efforts to disallow commercial development on roads less than twenty feet wide. This decision is unbelievably foolish.

A topic for another day is the Vacation Rental Ordinance. The Board is finally realizing that there is a downside to vacation rentals. Returning vacation rentals to permanent housing would solve most of the housing crunch we are now experiencing. We need a further curtailment of vacation rentals.

Today, sewer areas cannot take more growth due to capacity issues. We need sewer upgrades if we plan to increase density. The County must caucus with Santa Rosa and the Association of Bay Area Governments to ensure that affordable housing growth can be transferred to cities. The County can

spend its housing money in incorporated areas. Consider curtailing the corporate farm factories now labeled wineries. Support Santa Rosa's efforts to build higher. It is as valid today as twenty years ago that curtailing rural development is more efficient in saving farmland while saving the budget. Providing new housing in the cities is the direction forward.