



**AGENCY:** City Council/  
Planning Commission  
**MEETING DATE:** March 21, 2019  
**DEPARTMENT:** Community Development  
**PRESENTED BY:** Marie Jones  
**EMAIL ADDRESS:** mjones@fortbragg.com

## **AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

### **TITLE:**

**Receive Report and Provide Direction Regarding Mill Site Reuse Plan Local Coastal Program (LCP) Amendment Including: 1) Recommended Policy Changes from the Mill Site Visual Analysis; 2) Recommended Revision of the Citywide Design Guidelines; and 3) Policy Changes to the Community Design Element of the Coastal General Plan**

### **ISSUE:**

Since 2017, the Planning Commission, City Council and the Community have participated in 27 meetings to develop a Local Coastal Program (LCP) Amendment for submittal to the Coastal Commission. Staff has developed a summary of all workshops and City Council and Planning Commission meetings and the direction that has been provided (see Attachment 1).

Staff has worked over the past 17 months to incorporate the City Council and Planning Commission's vision, priorities and direction into the Land Use Plan, policies and regulatory language, which together comprise the three components of the Local Coastal Program (LCP) amendment, namely:

1. Land Use Plan (Zoning Map), which defines the uses that are permitted within a zoning district and the location of that zoning district (this is a map);
2. Land Use Policies, which are broadly written and interpreted by City Staff and the Planning Commission to define and describe development outcomes and conditions (this is the Coastal General Plan); and
3. Land Use Regulations, which are narrowly written and include strictly applicable requirements for the development of any Land Use (the Zoning Ordinance, e.g. Coastal Land Use and Development Code).

The Coastal Commission requires the City to complete a visual analysis as part of the LCP submittal. Staff has prepared a visual analysis of future development on the Mill Site per Coastal Commission staff direction for City Council and Planning Commission review and approval (Attachment 2).

City Staff is also bringing forward the relevant Element of the Coastal General Plan – the Community Design Element (Attachment 3) and a through revision of the Design Guidelines (Attachment 4) for review and direction by City Council and the Planning Commission.

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **VISUAL RESOURCES ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following summary is excerpted from the attached Mill Site Visual Resources Analysis 2019, please see Attachment 2 to view the entire report.

This analysis explores potential visual impacts of new Mill Site zoning (future development) on scenic public views. Per CEQA and the Coastal Act, only public scenic views are protected, e.g. scenic views from public properties (state parks, coastal trail) and from Highway 1 and other public streets. Private scenic views are not protected by CEQA or the Coastal Act and they are not explored in this analysis.

This analysis follows a standard methodology, which includes:

1. Documentation and evaluation of existing public scenic views;
2. Identification of potential impacts on scenic public views from proposed zoning;
3. Simulation of potential impacts on scenic public views, given development regulations ; and
4. Review of existing and proposed policies that will mitigate and reduce impacts of impacts to scenic public views.

The Mill Site is very large (425+ acres) and it is not feasible nor effective to take photos from every location with views across the property. Instead photographs were taken of representative views from all public view corridors. First the visual character of the viewing area is described for context and this is followed by an analysis of the scenic views or vistas from the viewing area. The views were evaluated for scenic quality in the foreground, mid ground and distance as applicable. View were evaluated from Negative to Highly Scenic according to the following scale/typology:

1. Negative – negative views are unnatural views negatively impacted or blocked by extensive gravel, asphalt, dilapidated buildings, parked vehicles, stored building materials, etc.
2. Neutral – Neutral views are: 1) foreground views that are significantly or completely obstructed by fencing or buildings; and/or 2) foreground views that are partially obstructed by asphalt or other development; and/or foreground views of low quality vegetation (non-native species). Neutral distant views include distant views of urban development.
3. Low Scenic – foreground views of native vegetation and distant views of trees or other natural features.
4. Scenic – Open views that are vegetated with native species.
5. Highly Scenic – highly scenic views include significant views of the ocean, bluff face, white water, and/or natural vegetated areas.

Simulations of potential impacts to views are approximate and were developed using photos of familiar buildings and building types to help the reader understand the potential impacts to the views. Photos were placed within the view shed to simulate what a potential building might look like given development requirements such as set back requirements, height limits, design review and visual policies of the LCP.

The visual analysis also includes the development of a new map that illustrates scenic views in the Coastal Zone, which should be protected from development, as well as a number of new policies to address scenic resources. Please see Attachment 2

## **Design Guidelines**

Over the years, staff has found the existing Citywide Design Guidelines to be overly long and proscriptive and not entirely relevant to projects that are proposed in Fort Bragg. Indeed the very length and complexity of the Design Guidelines has made the Design Review process cumbersome and challenging. Especially as any given project may need to comply with hundreds of different design guidelines. The complexity of the City's current design guidelines makes them difficult to apply to proposed projects, without requiring the City to ask applicants to completely redesign their projects.

Due to these challenges, staff recommends a complete revision of our Citywide Design Guidelines. Staff has reduced the 117-page document to a 40-page document (see Attachment 3). The revision is intended to achieve the following policy goals:

1. To make the Designs Guidelines more relevant to our community and economy;
2. To clarify expectations for quality design;
3. To be easier to use to evaluate projects for Design Review Permits;
4. To help ensure objectivity, consistency, and predictability in the design review process; and
5. To improve the sense of place in Fort Bragg.

Staff has hopefully achieved these general policy goals by making the following changes to the Design Guidelines.

1. Simplified the Design Guidelines by eliminating redundant and repetitive guidelines, deleting requirements that are addressed through the zoning ordinance, and eliminating conflicting guidelines;
2. Simplified some requirements and deleted others to provide for more flexibility in design without sacrificing design quality;
3. Added new design criteria that are specific to concerns of today, including for example material quality, solar orientation, native landscaping, among other topics;
4. Reorganized the guidelines so that there is a general section that addresses all general design goals, rather than this section being redundantly reiterated for each section;
5. Revised and shortened the specific use guidelines;
6. Reorganized the design guidelines into a table format; and

7. Differentiated guidelines that should be applied to larger projects and/or projects located in visually sensitive areas.

Staff has vetted the revised Design Guidelines with an architect, a designer and two builders to get input from the trades about the focus, applicability and ease of use of the guidelines from the applicant's perspective.

Staff would like to receive input from the City Council and Planning Commission. The following questions may be used to clarify your input:

1. Do the Design Guidelines provide the right balance between being proscriptive enough to ensure that new development projects fit within the community without being so proscriptive that they stifle creativity and innovation? Should they be further relaxed or do we need more restrictions?
2. Is the balance right between required and optional design criteria? Would you like to change some optional criteria to required criteria or vice versa?
3. What is missing?
4. Do you have any specific edits to specific guidelines?

Please review Attachment 3 to provide initial feedback to City Staff regarding the Design Guidelines.

## COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT POLICY REVIEW

As you review the Community Design Element (Attachment 4) please use the following color coding to identify why the policy revisions are recommended.

- All policies in **Purple text** are modified from the draft Specific Plan and incorporated into the Coastal General Plan Safety Element.
- **Blue text** denotes staff's recommended changes related to new State requirements from the Coastal Commission or other State agencies or changes in state law. The Coastal Commission requires that all new LCP Amendments address, through new policy language, new Coastal Commission requirements/priorities that have developed over time through case law, new statute and or Coastal Commission interpretation of the Coastal Act. Staff has reviewed The Coastal Commissions Local Coastal Program Update Guide (2013), to identify new policy language for the City's LCP to meet these requirements. The new required policy language is noted in the attached documents in Blue Text. These policies are provided for City Council and the Planning Commission review and direction.
- **Green text** denotes staff's recommended changes to create: 1) internal consistency within the Coastal General Plan; 2) the adoption of policies already approved by City Council in the Inland General Plan (updated in 2014); and 3) recommended changes by staff.

As you review the Community Design Element please think about what policy issues are not addressed as well as if any existing or recommended policies should be modified or deleted.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Provide direction to staff regarding proposed policy changes to the Citywide Design Guidelines and the Community Design Element.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):**

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The City was awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$50,000, a Coastal Commission grant of \$100,000, and a \$48,000 MCOG grant for this LCP amendment. Additionally the City has a General Plan Maintenance Fund, funded through building permit fees, that may be used for costs associated with the LCP Amendment.

As City Council and the Planning Commission further refine a final Land Use Plan and LCP Amendment, staff will prepare a fiscal analysis to identify if the overall Mill Site Reuse will have a net positive fiscal impact on Fort Bragg.

**CONSISTENCY:**

The City's 2014 Economic Development Strategy specifically includes rezoning and the eventual reuse of the Mill Site as a high priority project. The project must comply with the City's Coastal General Plan in order to be certified by the Coastal Commission. This may require modification of one or more policies of the Coastal General Plan prior to submittal of an LCP amendment.

**IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:**

There are a number of next steps for the Mill Site LCP amendment process, which will necessitate ongoing meetings and workshops to obtain additional input, collaboration and direction from the City Council, Planning Commission and the community in order to complete the task list included in the first part of this report.

LCP Amendment Task	Status
Prepare a Land Use Plan (zoning map) for the LCP amendment.	Drafted 10/2018
Prepare supporting maps, including: parcel lines, existing development, wetlands, transportation and access constraints.	Completed 10/2018
Revise the Coastal General Plan to include relevant policies for the LCP amendment.	80% Complete
Revise the Coastal Land Use and Development Code to include relevant policies for the LCP amendment.	50% Complete
Determine the "maximum buildout" scenario for the proposed Land Use Plan based on development regulations (height limits, parking requirements, floor area ratios, lot coverage, open space requirements and setbacks) for each zoning district.	Completed 10/2018 Will need to be revised if the Land Use Plan is revised
Prepare a summary of current lower cost visitor serving facilities, including: room inventory, revenue per available room, occupancy rates, etc.	Completed 9/2018

Climate change study: sea level rise and bluff top vulnerability & impact of Mill Site development on Climate Change.	Completed 11/2018
Tsunami study.	Completed 2007
Visual Analysis of Land Use Plan and analysis of how the Citywide Design Guidelines would be revised and implemented on site to reduce visual impacts.	Completed 12/2018.
Prepare an analysis of the City's capacity to serve future development, including: water, sewer, drainage, etc.	Underway. Will need to be revised if the Land Use Plan is revised.
Prepare a Fiscal Impacts Analysis of the fiscal impact (revenues and expenses) on the City of the proposed buildout of the Mill Site. This analysis will explore total potential revenues and expenses related to the buildout of the Mill Site.	Spring 2019
Prepare a Feasibility Study for the Mill Site Buildout. This analysis will explore the cost of development and anticipated revenues and determine in a general sense if development on the Mill Site is feasible.	Spring 2019
Transportation study, including availability of parking to serve coastal access and the effects of the project on the capacity of Highway 1 and Highway 20 both within and outside of City Limits.	Sumer of 2019 Will be prepared once Land Use plan is finalized and traffic volumes are up in the summer.
Botanical Analysis.	Summer 2019
Prepare and submit the LCP Amendment application with all attachments and analysis.	4/2018 –6/2019
Coastal Commission Review & Analysis of LCP Amendment. One year statutory review period.	6/2019 – 5/2020
Submission of "Friendly Modifications" by the Coastal Commission to the City of Fort Bragg.	6/2020
City consideration of "Friendly Modifications" and negotiations with Coastal Commission regarding modifications. Six month statutory	6/2020 –12/2020
Adoption of LCP Amendment by Coastal Commission and City of Fort	1/2021 – 3/2021
New regulations and policies become law and applicants can submit development project permit applications for review and consideration by the Planning Commission.	4/2022

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. City Council Workshop & Meetings - Summary of Direction
2. Mill Site Reuse LCP Amendment: Visual Analysis and Policies - 2019
3. Citywide Design Guidelines
4. Community Design Element, Coastal General Plan

**NOTIFICATION:**

1. Georgia Pacific Site Plan Notify Me Subscriber List
2. Georgia Pacific Site Remediation Notify Me Subscriber List
3. Dave Massengill, Georgia Pacific Corporation
4. Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Tribal Chairman Mike Knight & THPO Tina Sutherland
5. Cristin Kenyon, California Coastal Commission