

Area Plans – Big Sur

Vision Statement

The Big Sur Planning Area is a “Special Coastal Community” stretching from Malpas Creek in the north to the Monterey County line in the south. This Planning Area includes rural communities, remote ranches and homes, visitor-serving facilities, and outdoor recreational opportunities. The many State Parks and the vast Los Padres National Forest offer camping and wilderness experiences.

A fundamental and long-standing goal for the Big Sur Coast is to preserve for posterity the incomparable beauty of the Big Sur country with its special cultural, artistic, and natural resources, its landforms and seascapes and inspirational vistas. A primary tool in this preservation ethic is the critical viewshed policy.

Land use planning and management policies should maintain and restore of Big Sur’s rural and wilderness character. New development should remain within the small scale and rural values of the area, and quality should have precedence over quantity of any permitted use whether residential, recreational, or commercial. To this end, development should harmonize with and remain subordinate to the wild and natural character of the land. All proposed uses, whether public or private, must meet the same exacting environmental standards and must not degrade the Big Sur landscape.

The special characteristics of the Big Sur Coastal community are also to be recognized as a primary resource. The quality of the country itself has shaped the character of its people. The residents of the Big Sur coastal community, with their traditional way of life and their passionate vigilance, actively help to protect the environment, and significantly enhance the visitor experience. Their presence along this coast continues to reflect a pioneering attitude of independence, self-sufficiency and resourcefulness. The environment remains a special nurturing ground for artistic inspiration and creative fulfillment.

Because preservation of the land in its natural state is the highest priority, care must be taken that while providing public access to the beauty of the coast, its tranquility, and the health of its environment are not marred by public overuse or carelessness. Visual access should be emphasized throughout Big Sur as an appropriate response to the needs of visitors. Sightseeing and scenic driving provide the main tourist experience.

In order to support the continued existence of this “Special Coastal Community” we must seek to provide and protect housing to accommodate the people who live and work here, and to maintain cultural, regulatory and economic conditions that encourage traditional rural lifestyles to flourish.

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Special Policies For the Big Sur Area

Big Sur Policy #1 – Special Coastal Community

In recognition of the self-sustaining community of people who live and work in Big Sur, the incomparable beauty of the Big Sur coastal area with its extraordinary natural resources, landforms and seascapes, and its inspirational vistas, the Big Sur Planning Area is hereby designated as “Special Coastal Community” and a significant statewide coastal resource pursuant to Coastal Act Section 30253. In order to protect the dynamic interaction of people and place in Big Sur, as well as its special natural and scenic resources, policies tailored to the unique conditions of the area are included in this policy section, such as critical viewshed protection, a Transfer of Development Credits program, a public land acquisition policy, and special affordable housing provisions.

Big Sur Policy #2 – Large Scale Mineral Development

Large-scale mineral development is not an appropriate use in Big Sur, and shall be strictly limited. The total amount of proposed surface from any mineral extraction operation or aggregate of operations (including quarry sites, tailings, overburden disposal sites, drilling pads, processing sites, roads) within any watershed shall be the minimum necessary to support the operation. For the purposes of this policy, a watershed must be considered in its entirety, from the point where it drains into the Pacific Ocean, inland to the limit of the coastal zone.

Big Sur Policy #3 – Public Land Acquisitions

The fundamental goal within the Big Sur Planning Area is to protect both the community of people who live and work in Big Sur as well as the extraordinary natural and scenic resources. To accomplish this, the following measures should be carried out to ensure that future public land acquisitions and related land use changes are consistent with this goal:

- a. Ensure early and continuous public participation in the development and update of the long-range recreational development plans of federal, state and local agencies within Big Sur. The Big Sur Multi Agency Advisory Council should take a lead role in coordinating this public participation.
- b. Base future public acquisition of private lands in Big Sur heavily on the following criteria:
 - 1) Opportunities permanently to protect the critical viewshed;

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- 2) Balance the need to protect the natural environment of Big Sur against the need to preserve the long-term sustainability of the traditional Big Sur community, comprising the local residents, employees, commercial businesses and visitor-serving uses;
 - 3) Maintenance of the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods.
 - 4) Opportunities to enhance public access to and along the coastline, consistent with the public access policies regarding site-specific areas of this Big Sur Area Section;
 - 5) Opportunities to preserve significant natural, scenic, cultural and agricultural resources that are in particular jeopardy of loss to development; and
 - 6) Acceptance of voluntary land donations by property owners to the extent they meet the other criteria above.
- c. Preserve and maintain existing residences on public land to the maximum extent feasible.
 - d. Ensure that adequate public safety and fire protection services, as well as stewardship resources for on-going resource management activities, are available to serve public lands.

Big Sur Policy #4 – Recreational Development Plans

The County shall request State and Federal agencies to prepare long range recreational development plans for areas under their jurisdiction, and shall further request that these plans contain traffic components describing the portion of Highway 1 capacity required to serve proposed recreational development, including public transportation potential. The County shall encourage public agencies in Big Sur to address and ensure coordinated public safety, fire protection and hazard mitigation activities in their respective management and development plans.

Big Sur Policy #5 – Short Term Rentals

There shall be no short-term rental of residences within the Big Sur Planning Area. Inn units, Bed and Breakfast guest rooms and Hostels shall be the only habitable structures that shall be rented for a term of less than 30 days within the Big Sur Planning Area. This policy shall not be construed as precluding the renting of tents in an area designated as Visitor-Serving Commercial, such as Treebones.

Big Sur Policy #6 -- Local Workforce Housing

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The County recognizes the critical need for additional workforce housing in Big Sur to support the local business community and local visitor-serving recreational uses. The County shall work with housing providers, Big Sur business owners and public entities, Big Sur and South Coast Land Use Advisory Committees and other interested citizens to develop a program to provide affordable housing for those employed within the Big Sur Planning Area. This program should consider a variety of affordable housing options with income and occupancy restrictions, such as second units on residential properties, a small grouping of employee housing units on property readily accessible to commercial or visitor-serving uses outside the critical viewshed, or additional employee housing units on commercial and visitor-serving recreational properties. This program shall limit the creation of new employee housing units to meet the specific needs of the local commercial and visitor-serving facilities in Big Sur. County incentives, such as density bonuses, permit fee reductions, expedited processing times, and staff assistance in permit processing should also be considered. The program shall be adopted by the Board of Supervisors along with any General Plan amendments, ordinance amendments needed to establish density bonuses or other County incentives. Program implementation, such as funding mechanisms and compliance monitoring, may be carried out by a non-profit community housing organization, Monterey County Housing Authority or another specified entity other than Monterey County.

Big Sur Policy #7 – Westmere

Westmere, well known as the site of a lodge serving visitors to the northern portion of the Big Sur Coast, may reestablish the historic use as a lodge of 24 units that reflects the historic character of the site in design and scale. In order to meet policies for the protection of the critical viewshed, the new lodge should use the original site, which is hidden from public view. Overall visual restoration of the surrounding area, under the same ownership, should be carried out, as a condition of the development of the lodge, and public access to the beach at Rocky Creek should also be provided.

Big Sur Policy #8 – Pacific Valley

Pacific Valley Center, destroyed by fire in 1995, shall be permitted to develop up to a maximum of 30 inn units, provided that all policies of this Plan are followed.

Big Sur Policy #9 – Existing Commercial Facilities

Existing commercial facilities are encouraged to improve existing buildings as a desirable means of meeting demand. Renewal of coastal permits for existing commercial uses or the establishment of new uses will require careful consideration of the impact of the use on surrounding land from a good neighbor point of view. Particularly where commercial activities are in proximity to residences, care must be

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taken to ensure that noise or visual modification do not affect the peace and tranquility of existing neighbors.

Big Sur Policy #10 – Essential Services

Commercial developments within the Big Sur Valley, Lucia, Gorda, and Pacific Valley, as well as at Rocky Point Restaurant, Big Sur Inn, and Coast Gallery, provide essential services to the community and visiting public, and the importance of these services to the public shall be considered in connection with any proposal for commercial development within the Big Sur Planning Area.

Big Sur Policy #11 – Public/Quasi-Public Uses

A range of public and quasi-public services are present in the Big Sur Rural Community Centers and serve both the local community and visitors. These include, or have included in the past, churches, two elementary schools, volunteer fire protection, a County library, Post Office, Big Sur Grange Hall, the Big Sur Station - Multi Agency Facility, ambulance service, and the Big Sur Health Center. Such public and quasi-public uses should continue to be concentrated in the Big Sur Valley, Pacific Valley, Lucia, and Gorda Rural Community Centers, but should be upgraded based on present need and future growth. The volunteer fire departments should continue to be dispersed throughout the Big Sur area, wherever needed; as should radio repeaters, flood monitors, and navigational aids.

Big Sur Policy #12–New or Expanded Recreation Facilities

Maintenance of the rustic, outdoor recreational character of Big Sur is emphasized. The expansion and development of recreation and visitor-serving facilities in Big Sur shall be of a scale and nature that is compatible with the natural and cultural character of the area while offering opportunities for visitors to experience and enjoy the beauty and inspiration that the Big Sur environment presents. Intensive recreational uses or facilities are not appropriate and shall not be permitted. Parking lots shall be prohibited within the critical viewshed.

Big Sur Policy #13–Recreation Uses in Undeveloped Areas

Undeveloped areas in Big Sur shall be encouraged for low intensity recreational use, such as hiking, camping and nature study. Only minimal alterations of Big Sur's existing natural environment and recreational character shall be allowed. Development of low intensity recreation uses and visitor-serving facilities are encouraged on the larger properties where this will assist in providing economic uses of the land and in meeting Coastal Act objectives for public recreation.

Big Sur Policy #14 – Surfing and Scuba Diving

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Surfing and scuba diving are hazardous activities due to the high energy surf environment along the Big Sur Coast. Development of special facilities to encourage surfing and scuba diving uses by the general public shall not be allowed.

Big Sur Policy #15 – Hang Gliding

The Forest Service may designate appropriate areas in the vicinity of Pacific Valley for hang-gliding and shall provide supervision to discourage hang-gliding in areas where that activity could endanger the safety of hang-gliders and the public. Hang-gliding from private property shall be allowed only upon prior approval of the owner.

Big Sur Policy #16 – Non-Standard Homes

The County shall work cooperatively with Big Sur residents desiring to construct hand-made houses of original design, utilizing native materials. The County encourages this as a contribution to the coast's culture and will assist residents in ensuring these designs meet minimum necessary health and safety standards pursuant to the Monterey County Code.

Big Sur Policy #17 – Transfer of Development Credits

Transfer of Development Credits (TDCs) comprise a system that will assist the owners of lots restricted in their residential development potential by viewshed policies contained within this Plan. They provide an economic and planning incentive under which density credits can be reallocated within certain boundaries. Additionally, the use of this technique is intended to encourage the transfer of residential development potential from large ranch parcels within the critical viewshed in order to maintain the viability and stability of agricultural operations. To assist in the implementation of this program, the County shall maintain a directory of willing landowners of TDC “donor” and “receiver” sites.

Big Sur Policy #18 – Intent of Big Sur TDCs

The intent of TDCs in Big Sur is three-fold:

- a. To provide owners of "critical viewshed lots" fair and real opportunities to build in Big Sur.
- b. To provide incentives for preservation of large ranches in agricultural operations within the critical viewshed, and permanently to protect their viewshed.
- c. To provide economic compensation in the form of density credits for lots rendered unbuildable due exclusively to Big Sur viewshed policies.

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Big Sur Policy #19 – TDC Receiver Sites

Any non-critical viewshed parcel in Big Sur is a potential "receiver" site, provided the development proposed for the parcel meets the development and siting standards of this Plan and the TDC program policies for obtaining additional density. Critical viewshed exempt parcels do not qualify as TDC receiver sites. As part of a countywide Transfer of Development Credits (TDR) program, the County shall consider allowing Big Sur TDCs to be transferred to receiver sites established under the countywide TDC program outside of the Big Sur Planning Area.

Big Sur Policy #20 – Transfer Rights

"Critical viewshed lot" owners would have the right to transfer residential development potential from such restricted parcels and to build two residential or inn units elsewhere in Big Sur, or transfer two development credits for each lot retired subject to the criteria of these policies. Residential receiver sites shall be located only within Watershed and Scenic Conservation and Rural Countryside designations and may be subdivided to create one additional parcel to accommodate the transferred development credits provided under this policy. No more than four inn units over and above the maximum otherwise allowed by this Plan may be transferred to a Rural Community Center property and the Westmere Special Treatment Area. The County shall also consider allowing the transfer of residential development potential to receiver sites outside the Big Sur Planning Area under a countywide TDC program.

Big Sur Policy #21 – Coast Highway Management Plan

For the purposes of implementing the General Plan, the County recognizes the Coast Highway Management Plan (CHMP) as an inter-jurisdictional guidance document, to protect and enhance the Scenic Highway's intrinsic qualities, by establishing preferred methods and best practices to guide development, improvements, and maintenance within the Highway right-of-way, to maintain safe highway operation, and to facilitate a coordinated response to emergency highway situations. The CHMP does not impose additional regulations or requirements on public or private development outside the highway right-of-way and does not supersede County policies or regulations.

Any activity carried out pursuant to the CHMP shall be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan. Furthermore, any future related plans or programs for the purpose of implementing the CHMP, such as a Public Works Plan, shall also be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan.

Big Sur Policy #22 – New Access Roads

Sites for new structures shall be selected to avoid the construction of access roads visible from Highway 1 and to minimize the extent of environmental and engineering problems resulting from road construction. New roads providing

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residential, recreational, or agricultural access will be considered only where it has been demonstrated that the use of existing roads is not feasible. New roads shall be constructed according to all policies of this General Plan, and to the greatest extent feasible shall be located along the margins of forested areas, along natural land contours, or within existing vegetation. Roads shall be aligned to minimize removal of native trees, and constructed to minimum standards consistent with the requirements of fire safety and emergency use. Drainage and erosion control measures must be adequate to prevent harm to resources from erosion. Realignment of existing access roads may be allowed if the new alignment would better meet policies of this Plan, and the old alignment is retired and restored.

Big Sur Policy #23 – Roads Outside The Critical Viewshed

New private roads may be permitted only where:

- a. The proposed new road is appropriate for the establishment, continuation or expansion of a Coastal Act priority use; or
- b. The proposed new road is essential for basic residential access, and no feasible alternative exists; or
- c. The proposed new road provides a superior alternative to an existing road in carrying out the policies of this Plan, and the old road is retired and restored.

Big Sur Policy #24 – Driveway Accessibility

In the generally rugged terrain in Big Sur, use of an alternate driveway access shall be considered by the fire authority having jurisdiction consistent with Public Resources Code 4290 and Monterey County Ordinance 3600. Nothing in this Policy shall be construed as relieving an applicant from meeting the requirement that a driveway be accessible to all fire equipment if the appropriate fire authority does not agree that the driveway is not needed for fire-equipment access to structures.

Big Sur Policy #25 – Traffic Study Required

An applicant proposing a new or expanded private recreation and visitor-serving uses shall be required to submit with their application, a traffic study which evaluates the anticipated impact of the proposed new or expanded use to Highway 1 service capacity and makes recommendations on how impacts can be overcome or mitigated.

Big Sur Policy #26 – Traffic and Mining and Logging

An applicant proposing commercial mining or logging that may produce heavy truck traffic shall submit with their application a traffic study evaluating traffic impacts of the proposed use and potential conflicts with recreational and residential use of Highway 1

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and County roads, and forming mitigation measures to avoid such conflicts. In general, the County shall not approve applications requiring use of heavy trucks on Highway 1 during peak recreational use periods.

Big Sur Policy #27 – Shoulder Parking on Highway 1

Pedestrian and traffic hazards which result from on-shoulder parking at unsafe locations shall be corrected wherever possible, with priority being given to congested recreational attractions. New commercial facilities must have adequate and safe off-shoulder parking before they are opened to public use. Expansion of existing commercial facilities shall not be approved unless adequate and safe parking is provided.

Big Sur Policy #28 – New Access Points on Highway 1

The number of private roads and recreational access road entrances off Highway 1 shall be limited whenever possible for traffic safety and management purposes. The County shall require new developments to demonstrate that the use of existing public or private roads is either not feasible or that easements for use cannot be obtained before it approves construction of a separate entrance to Highway 1.

Big Sur Policy #29–Road Maintenance and Improvement

Sycamore Canyon Road and Palo Colorado Road shall be maintained safely to accommodate resident and visitor traffic. Improvements to the width or alignment of these roads shall be approved only if the County determines that negative visual and environmental impacts will not result.

Big Sur Policy #30–Appropriate Access

The public's right of access to the shoreline must be protected, and providing access and opportunities for recreational hiking on public lands must also be protected, encouraged and enhanced. However, because preservation of the natural environment is the highest priority in the Big Sur Planning Area, all future access must be consistent with this objective. Care must be taken that while providing public access, the beauty of the coast, its tranquility and the health of its environment are not marred by public overuse. The protection of visual access from Highway 1 shall be emphasized throughout Big Sur as an appropriate response to the needs of recreationists. To this end, curbing or berming shall not block or impede visual access. Visual access shall be maintained by directing all future development out of the critical viewshed. In addition, protection of private property rights must always be of concern.

Big Sur Policy #31 – Public Transit on Highway 1

Pleasure driving along scenic Highway 1 is a major recreational activity. In order to improve traffic flow, the County shall encourage public transit service to and along the

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coast. Local transit service within Big Sur should serve residents, employees and visitors to State Parks and Los Padres National Forest facilities, and private recreation and visitor-serving facilities.

Big Sur Policy #32 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

Improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians along Highway 1 shall be provided wherever feasible, and particularly where local use is the greatest, such as in the Big Sur Valley and in the area between Esalen Institute and South Coast Center. The highway shall be properly marked to alert drivers and provide bicyclists and pedestrians extra protection.

Big Sur Policy #33 – Shoreline Access

Maximum shoreline access and recreational opportunities shall be provided for public use, consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

Big Sur Policy #34 – Coastal Access Parking

Lateral access along the shoreline and vertical access to the shoreline should be developed and maintained in accordance with access management plans that provide for protection of natural and cultural resources, protection of views from Highway 1 and other public viewing areas, and that protect public safety. In order to provide for appropriate coastal access, creative designs shall be employed to develop parking areas consistent with the protection of the critical viewshed. Parking lots shall be located outside of the critical viewshed, as shall associated facilities such as restrooms. Associated facilities shall preferably be located in conjunction with parking lots.

Big Sur Policy #35 – Off-Road Recreational Use

Off-road vehicle recreation is not an appropriate use in the Big Sur Coastal area.

Big Sur Policy #36 – Coastal Access Trails

The coastal and inland trailhead access areas along Highway 1 should be planned for low-intensity, day-use only recreational uses with minimal development of facilities. The scenic and natural resources of these areas should be preserved in a natural state.

Big Sur Policy #37 – Big Sur Forest Land

The primary use of forested land in Big Sur shall be for recreational and aesthetic enjoyment and for educational, scientific, watershed, and habitat protection activities. Commercial logging of healthy old growth redwood shall be considered an inappropriate use of a nationally significant resource. Limited salvage and selective

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logging activities will be allowed to maintain the health of the forest provided that all natural resource protection provisions of this Plan are met.

Big Sur Policy #38 – Old Growth Redwoods

Commercial harvesting of old growth redwoods or rare or sensitive tree species is inappropriate in the Big Sur Planning Area because of their scarcity, uniqueness, and scientific and educational value.

Big Sur Policy #39 – Coastal Lagoon and Estuary Buffer

The wetlands, coastal lagoons and estuaries of the Big Sur Coast shall remain undeveloped. Development in the adjacent buffer area shall be limited to the minimum required to support low-intensity recreational, scientific or educational uses. The wetland, coastal lagoon and estuary buffer area shall, at a minimum, include all areas within 150 feet of the landward extent of hydrophilic vegetation or the average high water mark if no such vegetation exists.

Big Sur Policy #40 – Streams Supporting Trout

Water quality adequate year-round flows, and stream bed gravel conditions shall be protected in streams supporting rainbow and steelhead trout. These streams include: Garrapata Creek, Rocky Creek, Bixby Creek, Little Sur River, Big Sur River, Partington Creek, Anderson Creek, Hot Springs Creek, Vicente Creek, Big Creek, and Limekiln Creek.

Big Sur Policy #41 – Alteration of the Shoreline

Alteration of the shoreline, including diking, dredging, seawalls, rip rap and filling, shall not be permitted except for work essential for the maintenance of Highway 1. Where dredging or temporary dikes are required for essential work or maintenance of Highway 1, they should avoid disruption of marine and wildlife habitats and should restore the site to its original condition as early as practical. Dredge spoils suitable for beach replenishment should be transported for such purposes to appropriate beaches.

Big Sur Policy #42 – Shoreline Structures

Boating facilities or other uses requiring onshore structures are not appropriate on the Big Sur coast. If a harbor of refuge is required, it should be designed so as not to require onshore structures.

Big Sur Policy #43 – Petroleum or Related Products

Because of extraordinary risk to the Big Sur coast's special wildlife and recreational values, and based on extensive evaluation of the Big Sur Coast, no sites have been

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identified which would be either practical or appropriate for the exploration, extraction, or handling of petroleum or related products either on shore or off shore. Therefore, such uses are not provided for in this Plan, and are prohibited, either on-shore or offshore, in areas under the jurisdiction of the State of California and Monterey County. This prohibition is designed especially to protect the designated Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the California Sea Otter State Fish and Game Refuge, the watersheds that empty into the Ventana Wilderness, a designated Area of Special Biological Significance, and any Ecological Reserve, State Protected Waterway, State Fish and Game Refuge, or public beach or other public shoreline recreation area located on the Big Sur coast.

Big Sur Policy #44 – Consultation With Public Agencies

To assure protection of habitat and recreational values on adjacent lands, the County shall consult with the affected public land management agency prior to approval of any mining activity on any parcel adjacent to National Forest, State Park, or University of California Land and Water Reserve lands, access roads or trails. The County shall establish mechanisms for consultation and comment upon mining operations on federal lands.

Big Sur Policy #45 – New Roads in Critical Viewshed

New private roads, grading or excavations (including all alterations of natural landforms by earthmoving equipment) will not be allowed to damage or intrude upon the critical viewshed. Such road construction or other work shall not commence until the entire project has completed the permit and appeal process. These restrictions shall not be interpreted as prohibiting restoration of severely eroded watercourse channels or gullying, provided a plan is submitted and approved prior to commencing work.

Big Sur Policy #46 – Critical Viewshed Procedures

All private development applications shall require individual onsite investigations to determine whether they would intrude on the critical viewshed. The proposed buildings shall be accurately indicated as to dimensions, height, and rooflines by poles and access roads, by stakes with flags which shall remain in place for the duration of the project review and approval process. Such indications of the extent of development shall be recorded photographically with superimposed representation of the proposed project. The standard for review is the objective determination of whether any portion of the private proposed development is visible from Highway 1 or the major public viewing areas identified in the definition of the critical viewshed.

Visibility will be considered in terms of normal, unaided vision in any direction for any amount of time at any season. Ocean views from Highway 1 shall not be obscured by artificial berming/mounding or landscaping.. Exterior light sources shall be prohibited

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if such light source would be directly visible from the critical viewshed. The critical viewshed does not include areas visible only from the hiking trails.

Any private construction not in conformance with the approved representations shall be subject to removal.

Big Sur Policy #47 – Scenic Easements

Landowners will be encouraged to grant scenic easements to the County over portions of their land in the critical viewshed. As a condition of permits issued for parcels where additional development would be in the critical viewshed, a scenic easement shall be required to prevent future incursions into the critical viewshed.

Big Sur Policy #48 – Restoration of Lands

The County encourages creative public and private efforts to restore the scenic beauty of visually impacted areas of the coast and will assist such efforts where possible.

Big Sur Policy #49 – Land Not in Critical Viewshed

Land not in the critical viewshed shall be developed consistent with the following siting and design standards. These standards shall apply to all development, whether by public or private entities, and whether residential, commercial, or agricultural, including access roads thereto. When applying these standards to a particular project on a particular piece of land, the goal is to consider all of the standards together to best ensure that the visual continuity of the natural terrain is not made subordinate to the project. The natural terrain, not the project, should predominate.

To the maximum extent practical, all development shall be sited and designed to not detract from the natural beauty of skylines, ridgelines, and the shoreline.

Applicants for new development, when selecting a building site, must consider the visual effects upon public views as well as the views and privacy of neighbors. New applicants, when selecting a building site, must consider the visual effects upon public views as well as the views and privacy of neighbors. The portion of a parcel least visible from public viewpoints will be considered the appropriate site for the location of new structures. New structures shall be located where existing topography or trees provide natural screening and shall not be sited on open hillsides or silhouetted ridges. Sites shall not leave excavation scars or slope disturbance. Structures and access roads shall be designed to minimize alterations of the natural landform and to avoid, insofar as feasible, removal of healthy tree cover, and to minimize alteration of the natural landform; provided however, this shall not be construed as precluding a structure itself from being excavated into a landform in order to allow the structure to better conform with and blend into the surrounding area.

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New development should be subordinate to and blend with its environment, using materials or colors that will achieve that effect. Where necessary, appropriate modifications will be required for siting, structural design, size, shape, color, textures, building materials, access, and screening. New trees and other vegetation should not obscure more than the proposed residence so as to minimize the viewshed impacts along Highway 1. When mature, planted plants and trees shall conform in appearance to native growth in the area. Non-native invasive species shall not be used.

Big Sur Policy #50—Exceptions to Critical Viewshed Policy

The following are exceptions to the critical viewshed policy:

- a. Agricultural structures that are essential to and required by commercial ranching and agriculture operations that cannot be feasibly located outside the viewshed shall be permitted under careful design and siting controls. Examples include barns, fences, windmills, water pumps, water tanks, stockponds and corrals. All aquaculture facilities will be subject to the same resource protection criteria and environmental standards as other development.
- b. Existing parcels between Highway 1 and the sea, from (and including) the southernmost residential parcel on Rocky Point to the northernmost parcel on Kasler Point and from the southernmost parcel north of Abalone Cove to Garrapata Creek, shall be permitted to be used for residential purposes subject to the following additional standards. Additional standards shall include keeping driveways as narrow as possible, avoiding paving where practical and consolidation of driveways; the use of roof and surface treatments, colors and materials which will visibly blend with the surrounding environment; the use of berming and other measures designed to minimize views of structures without blocking ocean vistas seen from Highway 1; prohibiting the dumping of excavated materials over the coastal bluff, and additions, antennae, night flood lighting, or other improvements in view of Highway 1 without separate permit consideration; and dedication of scenic easement over undeveloped portion of lot. Guest houses shall be attached to the main dwelling except where they can be sited to better implement these policies.
- c. The following natural resource management needs and the specific necessary public facilities specified below are permitted, provided that in each case there be a finding that no reasonable alternative exists, that no significant adverse visual impacts will result, and that all development

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will conform with all policies of this Plan applicable to development outside the critical viewshed. The exceptions are limited to:

1. Removal of non-native trees and invasive species;
2. Improvements to existing County roads that are consistent with the limitations and requirements applicable to exceptions for "Highway 1" in this policy;
3. On-shore navigational aids (lights, radio beacons, weather stations) needed by the commercial fishing industry; and
4. Improvements to Pacific Valley School.

Big Sur Policy #51 – Signage

Commercial signage shall be limited. Permitted signs on private property along Highway 1 shall be constructed of natural materials or wood, and shall be unpainted except for lettering. Signs shall not be internally illuminated. No neon or animated advertising signs will be allowed inside windows or outdoors.

Big Sur Policy #52 – Big Sur River Flood Hazards

The 100-year floodplain of the Big Sur River poses considerable limitations on development in the Big Sur Valley. No additional permanent structures shall be permitted in the floodplain. Campgrounds or similar temporary outdoor recreational uses are most appropriate in this hazardous area.

Big Sur Policy #53 – Water Transfers

Interbasin transfers of water from the Big Sur Planning Area to other Planning Areas shall not be allowed.

Big Sur Policy #54 – Big Sur Valley Sewer Systems

It is the policy of Monterey County to not permit the construction of sewer systems and treatment plants to serve new development in the Big Sur Valley, unless potential pollution of the Big Sur River requires this step. The rugged terrain and dispersed population within the Big Sur Planning Area are unlike other areas of Monterey County. The geology of most of the Big Sur Planning Area has excellent septic percolation characteristics. The terrain and dispersed population in the Big Sur area makes it physically and economically unfeasible to consolidate private on-site wastewater systems into a regional wastewater system.

Big Sur Policy #55 – Wastewater Drainfield Setback

Unless the County Division of Environmental Health agrees that a lesser setback will not endanger public health, septic system drainfields shall not be closer than 100 feet from any creek, stream, or river. This Policy shall not be construed as rendering non-

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conforming any existing drainfield that was installed in compliance with the laws in effect at the time of installation. Replacement of such existing drainfields shall conform with this Policy to the maximum extent possible. When replacement drainfields would not meet this setback, the Division of Environmental Health should consider allowing feasible alternative means of sewage disposal once regulatory infrastructure has been codified to grant the Division of Environmental Health regulatory powers to require mandatory monitoring and maintenance with enforcement tools. Nothing in this Policy shall be construed as requiring the Division of Environmental Health to approve any septic drainfield or alternative sewage system that presents a significant danger of harm to public health or safety.