

June 17, 2024

Via Electronic Mail Only

Monterey County Planning Commission
County of Monterey Government Center
168 W. Alisal Street
Salinas, CA 93901
Email: pricet1@co.monterey.ca.us
pchearingcomments@co.monterey.ca.us

Re: Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan Update: Rural Community Center

Dear Chair Diehl and Members of the Planning Commission:

This firm represents Keep Big Sur Wild (“KBSW”) on matters related to the proposed update to the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan (“LUP Update”), and we submit these comments on their behalf. Keep Big Sur Wild is a group of residents concerned with protecting the scenic landscape, sensitive natural resources, and wild, rural character of the Big Sur coastal region. As you know, KBSW has been engaged on the LUP Update throughout its development, and submitted initial comments in December 2023 and subsequent comments in February and March 2024. We write today to oppose the expansion of the Rural Community Center land use designation beyond the original 1986 parameters and oppose other changes in the zoning that encourage or facilitate the ongoing commercialization of Big Sur, including allowing the conversion of rustic campgrounds to campgrounds with more amenities (“glamping”), which require additional employee upkeep. Curtailing uses that increase the need for more employees is an important solution to our current housing shortage.

First, KBSW opposes any expansion of the Rural Community Center (“RCC”) land use designation boundaries. While the Ad Hoc Committee has not formally proposed expanding the boundaries, the March 27, 2024 Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan Update includes maps of possible RCC land use category expansion areas. The Planning Committee requested input on the possible RCC expansion without providing any clear policy reason for altering the parameters established under the 1986 Big Sur Coast Land

Use Plan. Expanding the application of this land use category, which the Planning Committee notes is “intended to provide increased opportunities for people . . . to live in Big Sur as well as a full spectrum of community and visitor support functions,” would likely lead to increased commercial development. This expansion would be contrary to the underlying rationale of the Big Sur Land Use Plan—which was to severely restrict both commercial and residential development to protect both highway capacity and sensitive coastal resources. It would also contribute to the continued overtourism, by facilitating the expansion of new destinations that drive increased travel.

Second, the development of additional commercial uses even within the existing RCC areas undermines the core purpose of the Big Sur Land Use Plan. The primary principal of the Land Use Plan is to protect the spectacular wild and scenic natural landscape millions experience every year as they drive scenic Highway 1. Visual exploration of the coast by daytime visitors, the lowest cost avenue for the public to access Big Sur’s iconic scenery, will suffer even greater impacts by additional traffic related to commercial uses. The March 27 Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan Update proposes increased development opportunities with the only limitation that such development “may be allowed if it can demonstrate that it will reduce impacts to Highway 1.” It is nearly impossible to assess traffic impacts on a project-by-project basis. Traffic is cumulative in nature. Any development other than very limited employee housing to accommodate existing workers. will increase congestion on already overused roads. Highway 1 is approaching “maximum carrying capacity,” and any additional increase in traffic will cause a “significant impact” because this protected resource is already at its limit.

Third, the Planning Commission should address factors contributing to the need for additional employee housing. While KBSW acknowledges the necessity of affordable housing to accommodate existing employees, curbing the trend toward “glamping” or other expanded-amenity visitor accommodations and experiences which require greater employee upkeep will lessen the need for expanded employee accommodations. As we mentioned in our March 26 letter, there is an emerging trend toward less rustic campgrounds with expanded amenities. These amenities - tent platforms, yurts, improved restrooms, RV campgrounds – require more employee maintenance than the traditional “rustic” campgrounds prevalent in Big Sur when the Land Use Plan was initially drafted. Beyond the pressures glamping places on local affordable housing due to the increase in staff, it requires expanded utility development and erodes the availability of low-cost accommodations in Big Sur. Thus, it is necessary that the County enforce the VSU Cap against glamping sites functioning as lodge or inn units.

In conclusion, we urge the Planning Commission not to expand the boundaries of the Rustic Community Center land use category from the parameters established under the original 1986 Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan, preserve access to the iconic scenery of Big Sur by preventing the development of any additional commercial facilities, and address recent trends in visitor accommodations that worsen the need for employee housing.

Thank you for your time and attention to these important issues.

Very truly yours,

SHUTE, MIHALY & WEINBERGER LLP



Sara A. Clark

1793865.2

From: [Vasquez, Elizabeth](#)
To: [Price, Taylor](#)
Subject: FW: Ban Short Term Rentals
Date: Friday, April 5, 2024 4:36:46 PM

Good afternoon Taylor,

Please see the below correspondence below for BSCLUP Update.

Kindly,

Elizabeth Vasquez
Senior Secretary (WOC)
Housing and Community Development
1441 Schilling Place, South Bldg. 2nd Floor,
Salinas, CA 93901
Office: (831)755-5025 Desk: (831) 784-5737
Fax: (831) 757-9516
VasquezE4@co.monterey.ca.us

-----Original Message-----

From: Marcus Foster <marcusfoster69@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 5, 2024 10:49 AM
To: 293-pchearingcomments <pchearingcomments@co.monterey.ca.us>
Subject: Ban Short Term Rentals

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.]

Dear Members of Planning Commission:

I support the language that does not allow "short term transient use for thirty or fewer days whereby residents host visitors in their homes or on their properties for compensation."

Short term rentals deplete guest and caretaker houses for the potential use of long term rentals for employees and residents that contribute to this small and unique community. These people are the workers of the "legal" hotels, volunteers on our fire department, artists, etc., I have watched these properties that used to house friends that lived and worked here get evicted so new owners can turn them into commercial Visitor Serving Units, which have a cap in the Land Use Plan that we have already exceeded, so they can make a profit. This is a dangerous precedent as outside interests and even corporations are buying up houses outside the Visitor Serving Commercially zoned areas to convert them not only into hotels but also into special event wedding sites.

Some of the letters I have read in favor of STR's have admitted to doing so for years and have other houses around the state in which they use for the same purpose. It is a business for them at the expense of our community. They are upset that there will be a policy in the new LUP that prohibits STR's. They need to be reminded that this activity is already illegal in the unincorporated coastal zone of Monterey County and the current LUP states "residential areas are not well suited for commercial or visitor use." This is where the lack of enforcement by the County has led to this false sense of anger towards the draft update.

Enforcement of the LUP and County ordinances is mandatory in preserving Big Sur and its community! Monterey County is so fortunate to have this state, national and worldwide treasure that brings in millions of dollars to the County and California businesses. I believe it needs a designated Monterey County code enforcement officer just

for the Big Sur planning area that focuses solely on making sure the policies in the Big Sur Land Use Plan are upheld and followed.

The County and State can't keep talking about the emergency need for housing for its residents and workforce and then allow the conversion of existing houses into hotel rooms for visitors. It's time to take care of people that want to live here over the visiting public and the absentee second home owners that just look at their Big Sur properties as a way to make money.

--

Marcus Foster
Full Time Resident
Big Sur, CA

From: [Vasquez, Elizabeth](#)
To: [Price, Taylor](#)
Subject: FW: No More Planting of Invasive Non-Natives
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 9:19:20 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Good morning Taylor,

Please see the below comment for BSCLUP Update.

Kindly,



Elizabeth Vasquez
Senior Secretary (WOC)
Housing and Community Development
1441 Schilling Place, South Bldg. 2nd Floor,
Salinas, CA 93901
Office: (831)755-5025 Desk: (831) 784-5737
Fax: (831) 757-9516
VasquezE4@co.monterey.ca.us

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Please be advised that as of April 15th, 2024, my email address will be changing to VasquezE4@countyofmonterey.gov, and our County web address will be www.countyofmonterey.gov. Kindly update your records accordingly to ensure seamless communication. NOTE: emails sent to my co.monterey.ca.us address will forward to my new email address for a limited time. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

From: Marcus Foster <marcusfoster69@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 30, 2024 8:34 PM
To: 293-pchearingcomments <pchearingcomments@co.monterey.ca.us>
Subject: No More Planting of Invasive Non-Natives

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.]

Dear Members of Planning Commission:

Big Sur has a Monterey Cypress Tree problem. As many of you know, invasive plant species are taking over the natural landscape of Big Sur. We often talk about Jubata Grass (Pampas), Scotch and French Broom, Cape Ivy, etc., but the non native invasive Cypress Trees often get overlooked. Brought to the area from their two native stands, Cypress Point in Pebble Beach and Point Lobos, by homesteaders for fast growing wind blocks and shade. They were then used later in time after the

highway was built and before the LUP was adopted to screen homes along the famous scenic highway and are currently still being used for this purpose. However, over time these "invasive" trees grow to 70 to 90 feet tall and the houses and structures become visible due to lower branches getting trimmed up due to wind damage or owners preference for a "canopy" style look. This has caused the scenic ocean views to become blocked and homes to become more visible in the Critical Viewshed along with the fact that they outcompete the native vegetation. This trend is most evident from the "Crab Lab" (MM 64.5) south to Bixby Bridge. Houses that were never visible before now are and previous views of the ocean have all but disappeared.

I support the language in the draft update that states "removal of non-native or planted trees, except where this would result in the exposure of structures in the Critical Viewshed." It also states that it "discourages the planting of, and encourage removal of, non-native Monterey Pine, Eucalyptus, and Monterey Cypress trees within the Big Sur Land Use Plan Area."

I do however believe it should be taken to another level with a strict policy that any plant or tree that is in the category of "INVASIVE" non-native should be prohibited from ever being planted in the Big Sur LUP area. Invasives need more attention here as they are completely destroying the natural landscape, ecosystems and scenic viewsheds of the area. This would be a great start to reverse the environmental damage invasives have done to Big Sur over the past century.

Thank you,

--

Marcus Foster
Resident
Big Sur, CA

From: [Vasquez, Elizabeth](#)
To: [Price, Taylor](#)
Subject: FW: Prioritize Fuel Reduction
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 9:18:05 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Good morning Taylor,

Please see the below comment for BSCLUP Update.

Kindly,



Elizabeth Vasquez
Senior Secretary (WOC)
Housing and Community Development
1441 Schilling Place, South Bldg. 2nd Floor,
Salinas, CA 93901
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Please be advised that as of April 15th, 2024, my email address will be changing to VasquezE4@countyofmonterey.gov, and our County web address will be www.countyofmonterey.gov. Kindly update your records accordingly to ensure seamless communication. NOTE: emails sent to my co.monterey.ca.us address will forward to my new email address for a limited time. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

From: David Hurwitz <davidhurwitz@me.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 3:00 PM
To: 293-pchearingcomments <pchearingcomments@co.monterey.ca.us>;
BSLUP@firesafemonterey.org
Cc: Richard Bates <firewise.fscmc@gmail.com>; Pam Peck <pam@firesafemonterey.org>
Subject: Prioritize Fuel Reduction

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Planning Commission of Monterey County:

I represent the Boronda-Garzas Firewise Community in Carmel Valley, and urge you to edit the update to the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan to avoid regulatory hindrances to wildfire fuel reduction work.

Our forests are dangerously overgrown, including on public lands like Garland Ranch, adjacent to my own Boronda-Garzas Firesafe Community. Meanwhile, residents face daunting regulatory hurdles for fuel reduction on their private property. This must change, else lives will be lost, both human and animal, when the next wildfire hits and is fueled by excessive fuel loads.

Hence, the Boronda-Garzas Firewise Community strongly endorses the [January 25 letter to you from the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County](#) on this matter, and the detailed recommendations included in that letter, dated December 12, 2023.

Respectfully,

David Hurwitz
1 Boronda Road
Carmel Valley 93924

650-743-9788

From: [Price, Taylor](#)
To: [Vasquez, Elizabeth](#)
Cc: [Navarro, Janet](#)
Subject: RE: Item 14 in the Draft Big Sur Land Use Plan
Date: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 2:19:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)

Hi Elizabeth,

Sorry, I forgot to respond to this email. Yes, I plan on including this in the public comment for my report for 6/26.

Thanks,



Taylor Price *(he/him or they/them)*

Associate Planner
County of Monterey – Housing & Community
Development
1441 Schilling Place, 2nd Floor South, Salinas, CA 93901
O: (831) 784-5730
pricet1@countyofmonterey.gov



From: Vasquez, Elizabeth <VasquezE4@countyofmonterey.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 6:48 AM
To: Price, Taylor <PriceT1@countyofmonterey.gov>
Cc: Navarro, Janet <NavarroJ1@countyofmonterey.gov>
Subject: RE: Item 14 in the Draft Big Sur Land Use Plan

Okay, thank you! Will you be adding it as a public comment exhibit to your report for 6/26 or do you want me to save it in our folder and distribute it after that agenda gets distributed?

Kindly,



Elizabeth Vasquez

Senior Secretary
Housing and Community Development
1441 Schilling Place, South Bldg. 2nd Floor,
Salinas, CA 93901
Office: (831)755-5025 Desk: (831) 784-5737
Fax: (831) 757-9516
vasqueze4@countyofmonterey.gov

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information for the use of the designated recipient (s). Distribution, reproduction or any other use of this transmission by any party other than the intended recipient is prohibited.

From: Price, Taylor <PriceT1@countyofmonterey.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2024 5:04 PM
To: Vasquez, Elizabeth <VasquezE4@countyofmonterey.gov>
Cc: Navarro, Janet <NavarroJ1@countyofmonterey.gov>
Subject: RE: Item 14 in the Draft Big Sur Land Use Plan

Hi Elizabeth,

Yes, this should be for the BSCLUP.

Thanks,



Taylor Price (*he/him or they/them*)

Associate Planner
County of Monterey – Housing & Community
Development

1441 Schilling Place, 2nd Floor South, Salinas, CA 93901

O: (831) 784-5730

pricet1@countyofmonterey.gov



From: Vasquez, Elizabeth <VasquezE4@countyofmonterey.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2024 4:39 PM
To: Price, Taylor <PriceT1@countyofmonterey.gov>
Cc: Navarro, Janet <NavarroJ1@countyofmonterey.gov>
Subject: FW: Item 14 in the Draft Big Sur Land Use Plan

Hi Taylor,

We received the below comment and attachment to the PC inbox. I'm thinking it's for the BSCLUP, could you confirm? I can add it as a comment for 'non-agenda' items for the PC 6/5/24 meeting.

Kindly,



Elizabeth Vasquez

Senior Secretary
Housing and Community Development
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Salinas, CA 93901
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information for the use of the designated recipient (s). Distribution, reproduction or any other use of this transmission by any party other than the intended recipient is prohibited.

From: Jan Freiwald <jfreiwald@reefcheck.org>

Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2024 1:01 PM

To: 293-pchearingcomments <pchearingcomments@countyofmonterey.gov>;

daniels.kate@gmail.com

Subject: Item 14 in the Draft Big Sur Land Use Plan

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.]

Dear Planning Commission,

I am Jan Freiwald, the Executive Director of Reef Check. Founded in 1996, the Reef Check Foundation is an international non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of tropical coral reefs and temperate kelp forests. With headquarters in California and volunteer teams in more than 40 countries and territories, Reef Check's mission is to lead citizen scientists who promote stewardship of sustainable reef communities around the globe.

Most recently, Reef Check began working on restoring kelp forests, with the hope of reversing some of the devastating collapse of these ecosystems along the North American West Coast. The focus of this program is on community-based restoration by engaging volunteers and providing economic benefit to the local communities that depend on the ocean environment and are the most hard hit by the effective loss of kelp in many regions. Helicopters have been a vital resource for our restoration efforts in Big Sur, as you will see in the attached document the use of a local pilot, Peter Fenton, has allowed us to continue an ongoing aerial survey of the major effected areas. We have used this valuable imagery to validate progress, identify new targets for restoration, and to maintain a high situational awareness of the kelp forest health. Early discovery of newly lost areas of kelp is a critical component of our most recent approach to early intervention. Real time, high resolution aerial imagery facilitates early discovery of kelp decline before more widespread loss is occurring. This allows for early intervention and hopefully recovery and stop of further loss of this iconic habitat along the Big Sur coast.

Item 14 in the Draft Big Sur Land Use Plan (ref below) would severely impact our ongoing efforts to maintain and expand the natural wildlife habitat recovery in Big Sur. We believe the existing NOAA and FAA guidelines adequately protect this natural habitat and additional language in the proposed land use plan would have a negative effect on our efforts.

Sincerely,
Jan Freiwald, PhD
Executive Director, Reef Check Foundation

--

Jan Freiwald, PhD

Executive Director

Reef Check Foundation

phone: (831) 345-8167

jfreiwald@reefcheck.org

www.reefcheck.org

REF, Item 14. A permanent helicopter pad or heliport is prohibited in the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area due to helicopter use's direct conflict with Big Sur's rural and wild character; its effect on the peace and tranquility of Big Sur's small-scale, traditional and rural setting; and its potential to harass wildlife. A permanent helicopter pad or heliport may be allowed for emergency medical, fire, or search and rescue purposes, may be considered on a case by case basis if they adhere and comply with all other elements of this LUP. Temporary helicopter landing areas may be allowed for emergency medical, fire, or search and rescue purposes or as temporarily needed during construction. Upon the end of any such emergency or construction, the temporary landing area must be removed. Development of properties where the primary means of access is via helicopter shall be discouraged from developing, as development of these properties is a direct conflict with Big Sur's rural and wild character.



Ventana Wildlife Society

Conserving Native Wildlife and their Habitats

June 6, 2024

Taylor Price,
Associate Planner
Sent via email

Re: Comments for Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan Update

Dear Planning Commission,

Founded in 1977, Ventana Wildlife Society led the way to the successful reintroduction of the iconic Bald Eagle and the California Condor to their native central coast habitats. Through adherence to rigorous science, collaboration to amplify our efforts, and educational outreach to underserved and historically marginalized communities, our organization strives to address pressing ecosystem challenges while inspiring the next generation of environmental and wildlife stewards. We conducted our first release of captive-raised condors to Big Sur in 1997 and the wild flock now numbers 100 individuals in central California.

Condors and the Big Sur Coast LUP

We appreciate that protections for wildlife such as peregrine falcons, golden eagles and others remain in the marked up LUP. We appreciate that the California condor is specifically mentioned in the LUP (Section 3.8.3, paragraph 5d(5)) and that mining and other disturbance is restricted nearby “roosting” sites but we suggest you could also include “nesting” in this sentence. We also recommend you take this opportunity to provide further protections for the condor and offer additional comments below.

In the early phase of condor releases in Big Sur, which began in 1997, collisions with power lines was a significant threat, but due to Pacific Gas and Electric’s work to install bird flight diverters and installing “tree wire” as well as undergrounding one key segment of line, this mortality factor has been greatly reduced. Bird flight diverters and insulated power lines provide birds, such as condors, flying in low visibility a better chance of avoidance and are recommended in Big Sur.

We collaborated with PG&E and conducted a GIS analysis of condor movements relative to existing power structures within PG&E’s service territory and found only a small percentage of poles and lines represent the greatest risk. This risk assessment tool was used to identify top priority areas to retrofit and many were completed, though at least one high-risk area in Big Sur remains a threat today.

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J. Alan Fagan

Mason Mallory

Mark Osterkamp

Cesar Velazquez

Ventana Wildlife Society

9699 Blue Larkspur Ln
Ste 105
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831-455-9514

501(c)(3) Tax ID Number
94-2795935.

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Ventana Wildlife Society

Conserving Native Wildlife and their Habitats

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J. Alan Fagan

Mason Mallory

Mark Osterkamp

Cesar Velazquez

We request that in the LUP, you encourage bird protection measures such as installing bird flight diverters, insulated “tree wire” and other similar efforts for the protection of the California condor and other large flying birds such as golden eagles. Tree wire is highly recommended because it prevents electrocution and its visible profile is only slightly greater than an exposed wire, thereby in keeping with aesthetic values. Moreover, the installation of tree wire is an excellent tool for fire protection, which is an added benefit for the community.

Helicopters and Condors

Human or helicopter disturbance at condor nest sites has yet to be determined the cause of failure of any condor nest in Big Sur since 2006, when they began breeding in the area again and therefore is not a major concern for condor recovery efforts.

We believe the FAA is best suited to regulate airspace as opposed to local land use plans and recommend this section to be deleted. Alternatively, we request modification to include an exemption for condor protection measures.

Although no collision between a condor and helicopter has been documented to date, the risk to pilot and condor is just too great. We have long recommended that when low-flying helicopters are in condor areas, there should be at least one condor monitor located nearby with the ability to communicate with the pilot before and during flight operations. Most condors in the wild carry radio transmitters and our team of biologists and volunteers track the movements of the birds on a daily basis as well the whereabouts and outcomes of nests. Collision is a concern but easily managed, especially with professional condor monitors included in project work.

Similar to the comment above, helicopters are commonly used to retrofit power lines with bird protection and therefore we recommend that in the LUP in section 5.4.2 “General Policies”, paragraph 14 that it explicitly includes “retrofitting power lines with bird protection” in the context of construction.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems

One unintended consequence of the suggested language is the preclusion of legitimate biological survey tools and other environmental monitoring using such systems. We feel this would be a disservice to the protection of Big Sur resources to outright ban the use of unmanned aircraft systems. We trust the aim is to discourage tourists from using drones to capture their experience, which we agree is a nuisance to wildlife and people alike due to the numbers of flights and intensity in certain areas, but we suggest we should not limit our

Ventana Wildlife Society

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Ventana Wildlife Society

Conserving Native Wildlife and their Habitats

ability to conduct legitimate science. Nor should we prevent future film makers from capturing video from the air, but it must be well managed and enforced.

We recommend modifying the last sentence of section 5.4.2 "General Policies", paragraph 15 to read "Unmanned Aircraft Systems may be used for emergency medical, fire, search and rescue, or permitted environmental surveys and video recordings."

Events

In section 5.4.2 "General Policies", paragraph 16 we recommend you remove the ambiguity in the opening sentence "Special events of appropriate scale..." and define it better or better yet delete this entire section. Obtaining a Coastal Development Permit is not something easy to secure and the timeline of acceptance is often unclear as well. Is the County ready to handle these type of permit authorizations? We are concerned that this provision in effect would ban all special events. Is a Coastal Development Permit even an appropriate mechanism for an event if no construction is involved? Monterey County Zoning, Title 20.70.025 "COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMITS" states, "...those uses not considered development shall not require a Coastal Development Permit." In fact, under "Exemptions" 20.70.120 you could build a deck or storage building under 1,000 square feet without needing a CDP, for example, so it seems incongruous to require a permit for just an event.

Bixby Bridge

We wish to recognize the addition of text "Bixby Bridge vicinity" in section 4.1.2 "Specific Policies", paragraph A.3 is of the utmost importance. This ongoing safety problem and traffic nightmare should be addressed immediately and well before the adoption of this LUP amendment but appreciate greatly that the language was added nonetheless.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Kelly Sorenson
Executive Director

BOARD MEMBERS

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From: [Lygia Chappellet](#)
To: [Vasquez, Elizabeth](#)
Subject: Re: Correspondence Received for Agenda Item No. 5 on the County of Monterey Planning Commission Agenda for Wednesday, June 26, 2024
Date: Monday, June 24, 2024 10:07:17 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.]

These are both such important messages. Along with these I would like to record my letter to congressman Panetta about the aircraft overflights in the Big Sur Valley and Watersheds, which are disrupting wildlife and the peace we thought we were protecting with the designations of State and National parks. Again attempting to truly protect the coast.

Thank you, Lygia

On Fri, Jun 21, 2024 at 4:57 PM Vasquez, Elizabeth <VasquezE4@countyofmonterey.gov> wrote:

Hello,

Please see the attached public correspondence received for Agenda Item No. 5 (REF210024) on the County of Monterey Planning Commission Agenda for Wednesday, June 26, 2024.

Kindly,



Elizabeth Vasquez

Senior Secretary

Housing and Community Development

1441 Schilling Place, South Bldg. 2nd Floor,

Salinas, CA 93901

Office: (831)755-5025 Desk: (831) 784-5737

Fax: (831) 757-9516

vasqueze4@countyofmonterey.gov

From: [elsur](#)
To: [293-pchearingcomments](#)
Cc: [Scariot, Katie](#); [Price, Taylor](#); [McDougal, Melissa](#); [Vasquez, Elizabeth](#); [Vasquez, Elizabeth](#)
Subject: Correction - Corrected Letter for Submittal as Correspondence for Agenda Item No. 5 on the County of Monterey Planning Commission Agenda for Wednesday, June 26, 2024
Date: Monday, June 24, 2024 3:57:36 PM
Attachments: [Revised PUC Letter pdf.pdf](#)

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.]

Dear Elizabeth, Monterey County Planning Commissioners, and Monterey County Staff,

Please accept my apologies for the confusion! Attached is a corrected letter for submittal - please delete the previous letters I emailed in, and replace it with this one, "Revised PUC Letter pdf.pdf"

I would like to submit the attached letter in regards to the Big Sur Land Use Plan Update and Community Meeting held at the Big Sur Lodge on June 18th, 2024, and for the upcoming meeting, and in reference to the Big Sur Land Use Plan Update 210024.

Please let me know if I have submitted this to the correct email, and if not, please advise as to where to send this for submittal!

Thank you!

Jeannie Ford

Re: Big Sur Land Use Plan Update - REF 210024

Comments on the Big Sur Land Use Plan Community Meeting held on June 18th, 2024 - Rural Community Centers and Housing

June 24, 2024

Dear Planning Commission Chair Martha Diehl, and Members of the Monterey County Planning Commission,

Thank you for hosting the Community Meeting at the Big Sur Lodge on June 18, 2024, and for allowing for attendance via zoom - it was a pleasure to attend. I appreciate all the work that's gone into this, and the knowledge and understanding you all bring to the conversation.

I made comments at the meeting, and am following up with this letter, so they can be part of the public record. My family has been in Big Sur for four generations, and our love for the coast and community runs very deep. We appreciate the Commissioners' acknowledgement that the Big Sur community is vital in keeping Big Sur the way it is, and how important it is to support and protect it from increased commercialization.

In our opinion, the solution to the overcrowding of Big Sur and Highway 1 is to not allow more kinds of commercial uses in the Rural Community Centers (RCC), nor to expand the RCC areas, nor to open up the RCCs to Title 20, nor to allow more/expanded commercial uses within or outside of the RCC areas. If commercial facilities, RCCs, and/or Visitor Serving Units (VSU) don't expand or increase, neither will the need for evermore employee housing.

Looking at the June 18, 2024 Agenda, below are our comments to particular agenda items.

Agenda Item 3.c.: "Discussion of Rural Community Center Land Use Designation - What do we want it to do in the future?"

Our response:

The Big Sur Land Use Plan has done a wonderful job at preserving Big Sur. The RCCs should be continued and maintained and should remain the same as they are now, including:

- no expansion of the RCC areas
- no change of allowed uses for the RCC areas, and no opening them up to Title 20

- no relaxing or flexibility of the Critical Viewshed protections
- no relaxing of commercial or RCC area development restrictions, within or outside of the RCC areas
- no zoning expansions of the RCCs.

Agenda Item 3.d.: “How do Commercial Facilities Outside a Rural Community Center fit in?”

Our response:

- While there are some historic or grandfathered-in commercial uses located outside of the RCC areas, these areas should not be re-designated as RCC areas. Also:
- RCC areas should not be expanded to include current, existing commercial areas/ activities/facilities. If necessary, existing commercial uses could be grandfathered-in, but there should be no expansion or change in current RCC areas.
 - No commercial areas or facilities outside of RCCs should be turned into RCCs.
 - There should be no more expansion of the RCC boundaries to include these areas, and these areas should not be open to Title 20, nor should there be any increase of allowed uses.
 - Properties that are contiguous to commercial facilities or RCCs, should not have any increase or expansion of allowed uses, or “Affordable/Employee Housing Overlays” or other overlays.
 - There should be no increase or relaxing of commercial uses or facilities outside of the RCC areas.
 - There should be no relaxing or flexibility of the Critical Viewshed protections.
 - Public agencies need to also conform to the PUC and the RCC areas. Violations to the Critical Viewshed protections such as at Sobarantes and Garapatas should be corrected/removed, and the open spaces and viewshed should be restored to how they were in 1986.

Agenda Item 4.a.: “How do we promote additional housing for Big Sur community members? - Expansion of Rural Community Center?”

Our response:

As per above, there should be no expansion of the RCC areas.

Agenda Item 4.b.: “Affordable/Employee Housing Overlay?”

Our response:

There should be no employee/commercial/affordable housing overlays on property or adjoining/contiguous properties or RCC areas.

Agenda Item 4.c.: “ADUs and Caretaker Units?”

Our response:

The Big Sur community needs more housing, and this can be achieved without increasing development or commercialization. We support private property owners having Caretaker Units, ADUs and JADUs as housing for community members, employees, families, artists, etc., to live in Big Sur. Caretaker Units, ADUs and JADUs:

- build and support a healthy community by providing housing for folks working at the health center, local schools, the library, etc.
- support integration of the work force with the community, as it was in the old days
- have historically supported property owners to manage and maintain their property, and in many cases, have helped elderly community members age in place
- provide income support for property owners
- should be allowed to include existing housing options that were present in 1986
- could preserve and use existing structures, turned into housing or grandfathered-in, facilitated by the County
- could include cabins, yurts, tiny homes, park models, etc., as long as they conform to the traditional character of Big Sur
- up to one each for each private property parcel could be allowed (one Caretaker Unit, one ADU and one JADU per parcel)
- “shall be of a design complementary to the rural setting and character of Big Sur”, as per language in the PUC
- shall be rented for no less than 90 days

Agenda Item 4.d.: “Other?”

Our response:

- Public agencies should not be permitted to purchase and remove housing from the Big Sur community, as has been done in the past.
- Public agencies need to also conform to the PUC, Critical Viewshed protections, RCC areas and the updated PUC when it has been completed and certified.
- The creation, planning and/or implementation of the California Coastal Trail, and/or other trails, should not impose further Critical Viewshed restrictions on private property owners. In other words, if a Coastal Trail or offshoot is created, it should not restrict the private property owner’s ability to develop their property.
- The last paragraph of page 11 of the draft LUP update, version 11.27.2023, Section 3.1., has language that should be deleted. The draft language is printed in red as follows, “All development proposals should be considered any means of site-specific evaluation followed by thoughtful deliberation. Such deliberation may from time to time require that competing goals and policies be balanced against each other to produce a reasonable outcome.” This language undermines the PUC and is inconsistent with the PUC, the updated PUC, the Critical Viewshed protections, the

well-being of community members, property owners, the general public and future generations, and should not be a part of the updated PUC.

- Also, on page 13 of the draft PUC update, version 11/27.2023, in Section 3.2.1., there is language which seems to refer back to the above language in Section 3.1. The draft language is printed in red as follows, “other than the development exceptions provided in this section,” should also be deleted, as it supports the aforementioned “site-specific evaluation” language, and potentially serves to weaken the updated PUC.

In conclusion, without the further commercialization of Big Sur, and/or expansion (by designated area or definition of allowed uses) of the RCCs, the amount of housing needed for employees will not increase. I urge the Commission to place an immediate temporary moratorium on allowing any more approvals for increased commercial facilities, commercial uses and/or Visitor Serving Units (VSU). This would include not allowing any “rustic campgrounds” to be turned into VSUs. (If you bring your own tent or camper, it’s a “rustic campground”. If a tent, cabin, park model, tiny home, yurt, teepee, etc., is provided, it’s a VSU.) A moratorium will halt the expanding need for increased employee housing, until solutions have been worked out and the updated LUP has been completed and certified. Also, the Monterey County should enforce the rules currently on the books regarding Short Term Rentals (STR). If they are not allowed, then they should not be allowed. By taking the above-mentioned steps, we will stop the increasing demand for housing, and even potentially bring some housing back in use for the community.

It is very touching and amazing how Big Sur has remained almost entirely the same through the past decades, while towns, landscapes and countrysides all around have been forever changed by development. We must be careful now, to make sure that the LUP update does not lose focus, and bend to stresses of developers and moneyed interests - otherwise we will lose the Gold Standard distinction, and there will no going back. We must protect this precious place for this time, and for future generations.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate.

Sincerely,
Jeannie Ford

From: [Marcus Foster](#)
To: [293-pchearingcomments](#)
Subject: BSCLUP Update
Date: Thursday, June 20, 2024 10:07:22 PM

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.]

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I'm writing in support of the language in the draft update that bans Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones) in the Big Sur Coastal Planning Area.

This entire stretch of coastline is a strongly protected National Marine Sanctuary and Sea Otter Refuge. It is prohibited to fly a drone under a 1,000 feet over the ocean and shoreline. If you spend an afternoon at Bixby Bridge you will see and hear a constant buzz of drones that violate the Sanctuary policies all day long. I have personally seen the disturbance of shorebirds on the beach at this location and also at Little Sur. The sound and look of these Unmanned Aircraft come across as a predator to these birds and marine mammals that disrupts their natural behavior. This illegal activity has no real enforcement mechanism so an outright ban might help with enforcement by all agencies and deter this behavior.

These flying cameras also violate the privacy of people and properties along Highway 1. I'm fortunate to live on the west side of the Highway but with their increased popularity and affordability drones have become an almost daily nuisance. I've had them flying over my house and deck, people trespassing to recover their drones that have crashed on the property and have had many occasions of them spooking the horses here on the ranch by flying 15 feet over their heads. I've even seen a YouTube video of the horses here running for their lives as the drone followed closely behind. The text on that particular shot said "The Wild Horses of Big Sur."

The bottom line is drones are disrupting the natural environment and wildlife of Big Sur. It is also impacting the quality of life and privacy of its residents, one of the main reasons people live here.

I am however in favor of the language that allows them to be used in emergencies, fires and search and rescue. One addition I would like to see is an allowed use for invasive plant eradication. For example, State Parks used an herbicide drone on steep hillsides to go after Jubata Grass (Pampas) after the Dolan Fire. Perhaps with a specific permit process for this limited activity.

Thank you for all your hard and important work on the draft update. Your dedication will help protect one of the most unique coastlines in the world.

Marcus Foster
Big Sur, CA

From: [Rachel Goldberger](#)
To: [293-pchearingcomments](#)
Subject: Public Comment: REF210024 - Big Sur Land Use Plan Update: Housing/Zoning/ADU/RCC
Date: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 2:35:31 PM

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.]

To the Ad Hoc Committee for the Big Sur Land Use Plan Update,

I'm Rachel Goldberger, Program Manager for the Community Association of Big Sur; but I'm speaking on behalf of myself as a renting resident. I would like to share my thoughts about housing in this community.

When my husband and I moved here, we lived in a tent for a year and a half. And back then, of course, the phrase was always the same: "It's hard to find housing." We were lucky that we found jobs that were sort-of stable in the community, and we were adventurous, and had the capacity to accept all of the inconveniences that go along with living in a tent. We were lucky because we "knew someone." And usually that's the case, you have to "know somebody," get integrated into the community, in order to stay. You're kind-of "vetted" here. If you make it through a few winters, and people know you're not just here seasonally, you're not just "sold to the Big Sur dream" for a short spell, you're here to stay.

I think that's changing. Because the "somebodies" that we "know" are growing few and far between, and the numbers of second homeowners are growing more and more. So, really, the "people that we know" that can provide housing, are maxed out. They all have multiple, long-term residents living on their properties. And more and more homes sit empty.

As an employee of CABS, I have a running list (usually it's mentally, but now it's a document) of people my age who are looking for housing. And, while it used to be seasonal employees, these are now my tenured friends who are teachers, they are artists, they sit on boards, they're bringing innovative solutions to our community. When Steve Beck was mentioning earlier, "let's look around the room. There aren't a lot of actual employees here sitting in this room," that is a true statement. We need to usher in this next generation of stewards to our community and we can't do that because none of us have the money to afford property here, and the rental options are drying up. And so, being able to look at these innovative solutions so we can bring in these members of our community is so important. I have 14 adults, 4 children, and 3 families on my list. 3 are teachers. We have musicians, community liaisons, forest service employees. Only 3 of them work at business facilities that provide staff housing on-site. Of course, these employees would never be able to get into this housing because there are more employees than housing units available.

I also wanted to point out at our meeting with the Coastal Commission a few weeks ago,

Tara had mentioned that her grandchild is in a class at Captain Cooper school that only has 6 students. So, while maybe the census population numbers are reflecting that the population hasn't changed in Big Sur, families and younger people aren't able to stay here because we can't afford to buy here.

Here are some basic solutions I thought of:

When discussing "housing" for the BSLUP update, the terminology used has been: "affordable/employee housing," however, of the 14 adults, 4 children, 3 families on my list, only 3 of them would fit into this category. The others are independent contractors. Some others CAN afford housing, if it were provided to them. So maybe we need to change the terminology to reflect what we're looking for, which is "Community" housing. The term "affordable" comes with all sorts of regulations that we may never be able to meet here in Big Sur.

Regarding ADUs and the definition of "long term." The current definition of "long-term" stays requires a minimum stay of 30 days. I propose that we change that to reflect something a little more long term than 30 days, like 6 or 12 months minimum. I think that would really keep more people here. It's really easy for a non-resident to take a month off of their normal job and "spend an extended vacation in Big Sur" and that pulls from the available housing pool for our actual long-term residents.

I do not support the expansion of the Rural Community Center, however, I do support the option of a "community housing" overlay option, adjacent to the Big Sur businesses/agency properties that wish to provide additional housing for their employees (provided that this remains available for community housing only, and never transforms into a Visitor Serving Unit).

I'm appreciative of this forum and the opportunity for us to continue to usher in these next stewards and continue to protect our community.

Rachel Goldberger, Big Sur Resident

From: [p.laughing.horse](mailto:p.laughinghorse)
To: 293-pchearingcomments
Cc: p.laughinghorse@gmail.com
Subject: Big Sur LUP - discussion of updates
Date: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 8:17:54 AM

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24 June, 2024

To the members of the Planning Commission:

Please leave the Big Sur coast alone. There is only one Big Sur. The only way to improve it is to reaffirm that point; being unique and delicate, it must be further protected by retaining and strengthening the 1986 LUP. We all likely remember "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot... and another parking lot, and another turn lane, on and on." Do we really want to create a Disneyland of Highway One?

The reason Big Sur attracts so many people from around the world, is the unique character, an astonishing wild and scenic coast which was NOT created by humans. The existing policies of the 1986 Land Use Plan must be retained and strengthened.

The existing LUP, wisely certified by the County and the State, must be retained. The LUP IS the reason Big Sur is so celebrated, and has retained its true, wild character. This is the commitment made by the County and the State to the original LUP.

Prioritizing the passage of the largest number of people to drive through Big Sur on HWY. 1 includes keeping destinations to an absolute minimum. It is central to preserving the critical view shed policy.

Highend resorts are required in the LUP to provide affordable campgrounds, to balance their pricier accommodations. Those high-end facilities apparently need 4 employees to service each guest. Affordable camp sites need only one or so employees to maintain a site, and toilet facilities are shared. Campgrounds owners want to build 'glamping' sites, again 4 employees will be needed to oversee each 'guest'. Glamping is NOT camping, with utilities (water and septic hookups) to maintain, as well as linens, etc. True rural campgrounds require one or two employees to maintain each site. Toilets are shared. Building employee housing cannot be based on such an inflated use of campgrounds, and other community members also need housing.

Ventana inn turned the Post Homestead from housing to a restaurant, and agreed at that time to supply public toilets. The toilets have been locked up and unavailable in recent years; that needs to be reversed.

Any ADUs, etc. are complex discussions and might only be allowed in RCC areas, not on residential neighborhoods. STRs should not be allowed in private residential neighborhoods for reasons of liability. Every STR is lost housing.

Finally, would the passage of AB2560 effect the Big Sur LUP?

Thank you for your work, P. Goodale

From: sur1954janet@aol.com
To: [293-pchearingcomments](#)
Subject: June 26, 2024 - Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan Update - REF 210024
Date: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 9:48:33 AM
Attachments: [Screenshot_20240625-062741.png](#)
[Screenshot_20240625-061050.png](#)
[Screenshot_20240625-060946.png](#)
[Screenshot_20240625-081756.png](#)

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Madam Chair & Planning Commissioners,

Thank all of you for allowing me to speak ...

Housing, I've struggled with this now like forever. I once thought it should all be within the residential communities, but there is no way to oversee this, just like Vacation Rentals. There are the changes to the density as well and then there are the issues of available water and road issues. By mid to late summer some of these communities are put on water rationing. The Coastlands Community is a good example of where this happens a lot. You also have to remember that the Big Sur Land Use Plan does not permit 2nd habitable structures on properties less than two acres either.

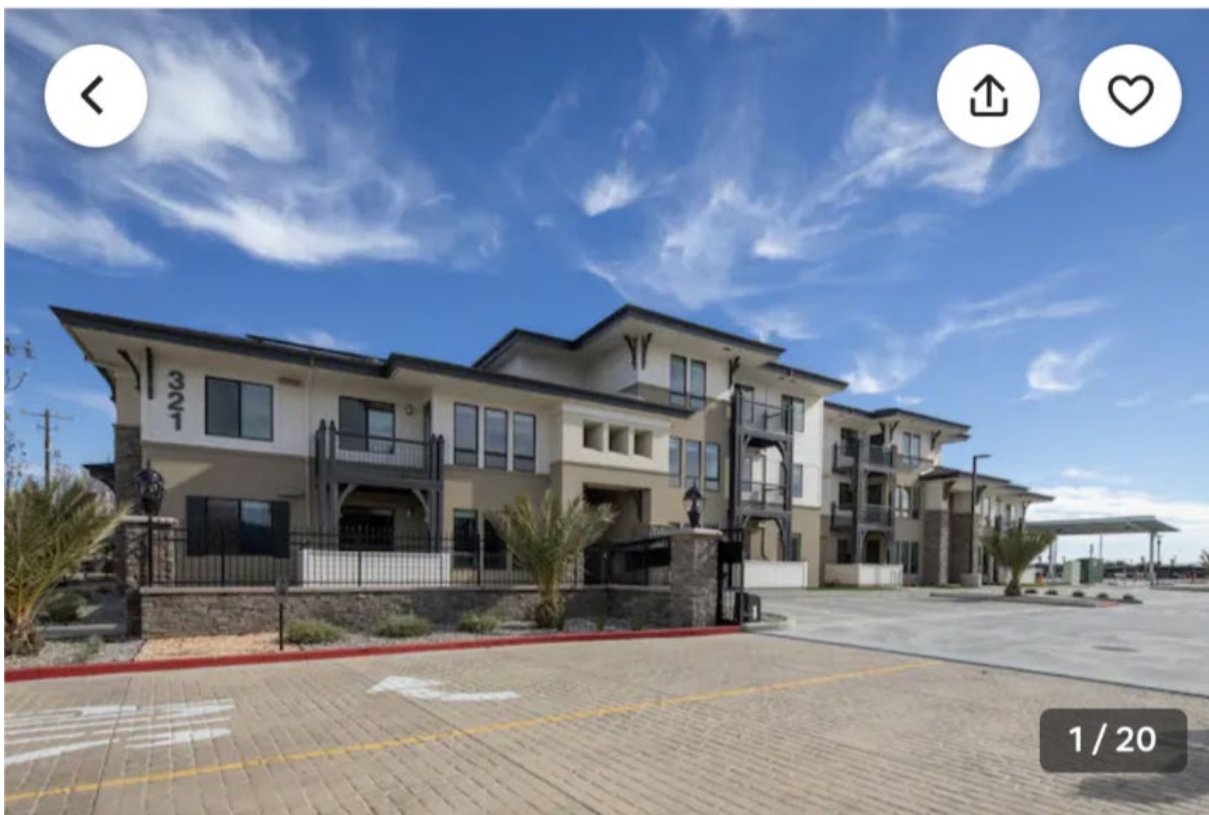
So I think perhaps it would be better for all, if all new housing were built within the Rural Community Center and Commercial Districts, this way you somewhat have a handle on it and what's going on. Why I say this is I see a lot of properties selling and the new owners not wanting anyone living on their property so therefore all this hard work and time we have put in to build more housing will than just all vanish making it a waste of time and money ... but please keep what housing we have now open and available.

I've also heard a lot of talk about grandfathering in "all" the unpermitted habitual structures, I don't think that's right to reward people for something they knew was illegal to begin with, let's face it, we all did it knowing we might get popped! So no to grandfathering in any non-permitted structure built after 1968. We have all the earlier (1968 & older) nonconforming structures that are a permitted use so those are good to go, its just these newer ones that people have recently build within say the last 10, 15, 20, 30 years that should not ... you ask me why, well because then all of these so called illegal units that are now legal can and will be STRed out as Vacation Rentals in our area, yes these ADUs supposedly can't be STRed out, but the owner could now move into his newly built "affordable ADU" and in turn STR out his main home, do we want this? Hell NO, because we are trying to supply housing to Big Sur residents that want to live here, not supply more visitor-serving units to visiting vacationers!

And before I forget again and again, back in 2015 or 16 when I was attending all the LUAC Meeting I suggested that all ADUs should require occupancy to be for six (6) months to a year (12 months), but now I see where I should have included all residences and habitable structures!

Aw, something new that was spotted recently ... No, it's not Big Sur but it's in the boundaries of Monterey County. In the Salinas Valley area, everyone has been working together to build affordable workforce (bad word) housing and they have done well, but one of the newest complexes built in King City now has an Airbnb host STRing out several of the units, and this is why I worry about housing, ADUs and caretaker's units because they can turn into Vacation Rentals! Lets put our housing somewhere we can somewhat keep and eye on it!

And heavens forbid, please don't expand Rural Community Centers (RCC) or Commercial districts, Big Sur is FULL ...



Trinidad at the Milagro 102

Entire rental unit in King City, California

6 guests · 2 bedrooms · 5 beds · 2 baths

★ 5.0 · [3 reviews](#)



Hosted by Alissa

Superhost · 3 years hosting



Request to book

Your total

1 night \$325.24

Total (USD) \$325.24

Price breakdown

Pay with



Bank Account



Credit or debit card



PayPal



Price breakdown

Jul 19 – 20

\$285.00

Subtotal	\$285.00
Airbnb service fee	\$40.24
<hr/>	
Total	\$325.24

<
Request to book

Your total

2 nights	\$569.68
<hr/>	
Total (<u>USD</u>)	\$569.68

[Price breakdown](#)

Pay with



Bank Account



Credit or debit card



Price breakdown

Jul 19 – 21 \$499.20

Airbnb service fee \$70.48

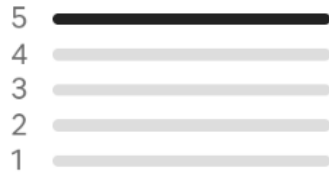
Total ~~\$612.48~~ **\$569.68**

Alissa recently lowered the price for these dates (from the average rate for the past 60 nights).



★ 5.0

Overall rating



Cleanliness

5.0



Accuracy

5.0



Check-in

5.0



3 reviews

Most recent ▾

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Amar

6 months on Airbnb

★★★★★ · 6 days ago · Group trip

Brand new place and very spacious.



Srinivas

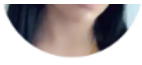
The Colony, Texas

★★★★★ · May 2024 · Stayed with kids

Great place and very neat



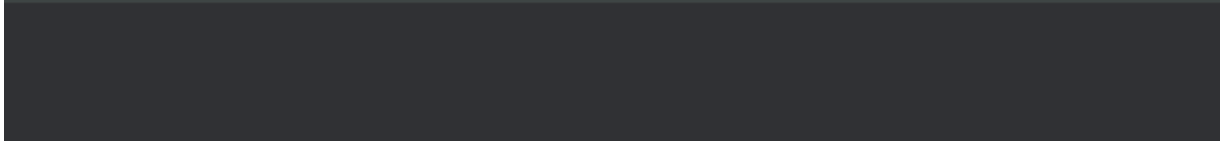
Yasmin



Tacoma, Washington

★★★★★ · May 2024 · Stayed with kids

Fast response and friendly



Thank you as always,
Janet Hardisty



Community Association of Big Sur
 PO Box 59, Big Sur, CA 93920

June 20, 2024

**Caring for the coast
 for over 50 years**

Community Association of Big Sur is a 501 (c) 3 (EIN 77-0091132). Our shared mission is to protect and defend the rural and residential character, and to preserve the natural and aesthetic beauty of the Big Sur coast; to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the Big Sur Community; to encourage community service and otherwise act in the interests of the residents and property owners of the community. CABS is committed to a collaborative approach towards responsible land stewardship. CABS believes that an effective partnership between private and public property owners is essential for a sustainable and healthy community.

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Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan Update
 REF 210024
 Rural Community Centers - Housing

Martha Diehl, Chair
 Kate Daniels
 Monterey County Planning Commissioners
 % Monterey County HCD-Planning
 1441 Schilling Place, South 2nd Floor
 Salinas, CA 93901

Dear Martha, Kate, Taylor and Katie,

Thank you for convening the Big Sur Community Meeting at the Big Sur Lodge yesterday afternoon to discuss Rural Community Centers (RCC) Land Use Designation and Housing.

I am very appreciative of Martha and Kate, working alongside County Staff, to get the BSLUP Draft Update right. Their encouragement of asking for public comment every step of the way and working alongside us, is impressive. I am grateful for this platform to be heard.

Housing along our 70 miles of coastline is needed and has been needed for some time. I would like to first suggest that we get away from "Affordable" and "Employee" when speaking of housing and just use the word "Housing". This adequately describes what we want and need as a community.

When I think of "affordable" with housing, I want Monterey County to be thinking of this piece in the following ways:

- Streamlined or administrative permitting and more affordable permitting. Incentivize the property owner.
- ADUs, JADUs, Caretaker Units and other types of housing e.g., Yurts, Modular Units, Tiny Homes - this type of housing (once electrical, water, septic are installed) you simply erect the kit, or drive to the finished site, hook up and housing is available. Months vs years.
- Private Property: Existing housing stock / grandfathered existing unpermitted housing - very important for the County to look at this and create a process that is fair to help the property owner



- navigate for a legal non conforming structure(s).
- All solutions for housing need to be considered including sizes: a single person, couples and families.
 - Long term “Housing” includes a mechanism for an increase in density for long term, deed restricted community housing that is consistent with local design standards e.g., redwood board siding, decking and Class A roofing.
 - A density increase allowance for Visitor Serving businesses for more “Housing” for employees and their families.
 - Monterey County Ordinance to ban Short Term Rentals (STRs) in the Big Sur area. This alone will help to stop the purchase of homes in residential areas of Big Sur to be turned into profit and event spaces and not available for long term rentals.

I am glad to hear the following is being considered in the BSLUP Draft Update:

- The Housing Overlay is back on the table for “Housing”.
- Caretaker Units are back in the draft update.
- The allowance of an ADU, JADU and a Caretaker Unit on a property (all three) with the Main House.
- The Amendment to remove the cap of 50 on ADUs and move back to Caretaker Units.

The bottom line, “Community” is a resource that also needs to be protected and supported. Community and Housing go hand-in-hand. Without one you do not have the other.

Big Sur has an opportunity to increase housing in a way that follows the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan values and at the same time encourage the younger generation the opportunity to stay and be the next stewards of Big Sur.

Sincerely,

Patte Kronlund
Executive Director, Community Association of Big Sur