

Project Goals, Policy Guidance, Local Vulnerabilities, Background, Schedule, and Glossary for Local Coastal Program Amendments

Project Goals:

- Ensure that coastal development is safe,
- Raise awareness about coastal hazards,
- Provide more certainty for applicants regarding the development permit process,
- Conserve beaches and coastal access for recreational and habitat value,
- Complete Board directed amendments to RB and RBH zones, allowing decks in setbacks, and
- Move applicable General Plan policies for shorelines and climate change into Coastal Area Plan.



**Map Assets and
Future Risk
Scenarios**



**Assess
Vulnerability**



**Provide
Actionable
Results**



**Build
Awareness**



**Facilitate
Collaboration**

State Sea Level Rise Planning Guidance and the Proposed County Amendments:

How much sea level rise do we need to plan for?

State guidance¹ recommends using the “precautionary principle” to plan for sea level rise, particularly for critical facilities.

- *The proposed amendments would require most development that is in a coastal hazards screening area to plan for the “intermediate-high” scenario, which is 4.9 feet by 2100. If high rates of GHG emissions continue globally, there is about a 50% chance of sea level rise exceeding 3.1 feet by 2100.*

What is managed retreat?

Managed retreat is a regulatory tool that is encouraged by State Guidance and involves 1) moving development back from the shore onsite or to a different site, 2) reducing its size and scale, and/or 3) imposing restrictions or require removal of shoreline protective devices/seawalls and revetments (e.g. “coastal armor”). The desired result is to conserve and restore beaches for public beach access and allow natural sediment to accrue rather than erode.

- *The proposed amendments primarily rely on elevating development for resilience, often in conjunction with FEMA requirements that already require more elevation on the North and South Coasts.*
- *Removal of coastal armor would not be required at this time, but more analysis of alternatives and impacts will be required for new or enhanced shoreline protective devices.*



Homes at Solromar (South)

¹ California Coastal Commission Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance, Adopted August 12, 2015, and California Coastal Commission Coastal Adaptation Planning Guidance: Residential Development, March 2018. The State of California Sea Level Rise Guidance, 2024 Draft Update.

Is there an issue with Shoreline Protective Devices?

Shoreline protective devices can accelerate coastal erosion and limit public access to beaches. State guidance intends to limit these harmful effects of coastal armor on beaches by interpreting Section 30235 of the Coastal Act to allow new/enhanced armor only for coastal dependent uses and principal development existing before January 1, 1977 (the date the Coastal Act was effective).

- *The proposed amendments allow new/enhanced armor only for coastal dependent uses and principal development existing before these amendments for resilience to sea level rise (combined with 1% annual chance storms).*
- *After principal development is designed for resilience to sea level rise, existing shoreline protective devices would be maintained but not enhanced.*
- *As redevelopment occurs, all principal structures in “Existing Communities” will eventually be designed for resilience to sea level rise and new armor would not be allowed, but existing armor can be maintained. In the meantime, neighborhood scale plans would be developed to address unique local conditions such as access, infrastructure, community character, etc.*

What is the timing to be resilient to sea level rise?

State guidance calls for substantial regulatory changes to how non-coastal dependent shoreline land uses are planned, designed, and built.

- *The proposed amendments use traditional planning approaches to phase in regulatory changes over time as new development occurs.*

Why have some jurisdictions included amendments for sea level rise while others have not?

State guidance is simpler to apply to rural or “greenfield” undeveloped areas without coastal armor, but it is more challenging for urbanized areas and stretches of coast with a high prevalence of coastal armor.

- *Our unincorporated County shoreline consist of about 66% coastal armor (approximately 20 of 30 miles) and so these amendments provide a general direction but do not address all regional or neighborhood scale characteristics. These amendments are a first step to ensure new development that lasts for 80-100 years is resilient for storms today and future sea level rise.*

So, what’s the “big picture” approach for Ventura County?

State guidance presents a long-term vision of a coastline without shoreline protective devices that allows for space for beaches.

- *The proposed amendments present a first step in a long-range process in which land uses become less reliant on shoreline protective devices as new/re-development occurs.*
 - *With redevelopment and elevation of principal uses (e.g. residential dwellings) existing coastal armor would no longer be enlarged but existing devices may be maintained.*
 - *With redevelopment and elevation of principal uses (e.g. residential dwellings) that do not have coastal armor, new coastal armor would not be allowed. This means that the long-range plan for areas currently without shoreline protective devices such as Rincon Point, Hollywood Beach, and Silver Strand would rely on elevation of structures, dunes, sand and cobble berms, sediment management, and maintaining beaches, rather than constructing new shoreline protective devices.*
 - *After this round of amendments, there could be opportunities to develop more specific neighborhood scale plans.*

How would these amendments benefit coastal residents with homes near the shore?

- *The proposed amendments would provide a clearer path toward development approvals and development that is safe from coastal hazards.*
- *A ministerial permit pathway is proposed for limited maintenance of coastal armor (protective coatings and some restacking of revetment that falls onto the beach).*

- Potentially lower insurance costs after new development is designed for resilience to sea level rise.
- Uncovered porches and decks could be built further into setbacks on the lot.

How would these amendments benefit public coastal access and conservation of public beaches?

- The proposed amendments would include future beach conditions in the analysis of impacts from new development in order to help maintain beaches.
- Prioritize sustainable and “green” adaptation projects and design features.
- Planning for regional sea level rise and coastal resource management with different jurisdictions/agencies.
- Long-range plan to reduce reliance on coastal armor and to conserve currently unarmored coastline.

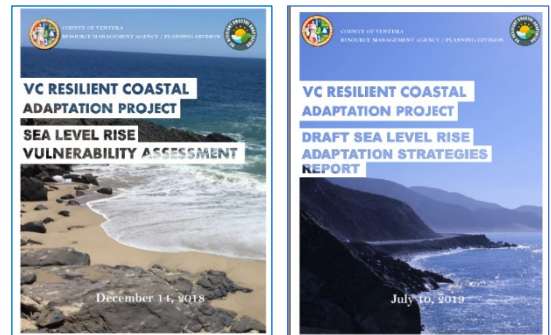
Modeled and Projected Vulnerabilities:

- The County’s Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Strategies Report describe that public beaches on the North and South Coasts of the unincorporated area are the most vulnerable to sea level rise, as they will be trapped between coastal armor and rising tides. Other vulnerable areas include agriculture inland of Ormond Beach, Pacific Coast Highway on the South Coast, and the Silver Strand evacuation route.
- In the mid-to long term, if nothing is done, narrow beaches on the County’s North and South Coast will be inundated, and wide beaches such as Hollywood Beach and Silver Strand will be cut in half, substantially reducing public access, recreational uses, and habitat for sensitive species.
- With 5 feet of sea level rise, and a one percent chance storm, nearly all development in the coastal neighborhoods on the North and South Coasts would be inundated and many shoreline protective devices that serve North Coast communities begin to be overtopped by rising tides without any coastal storms.
- The point where coastal storm flooding that is exacerbated by sea level rise shifts from a nuisance to a hazard varies by site, but, if nothing is done, tidal inundation will affect land uses that are being planned and built today. There are also public assets that are vulnerable within the 2040 General Plan Horizon, including segments of Pacific Coast Highway on the South Coast, an evacuation route at the Silver Strand Community, and a low-elevation area near the Hollywood Beach sand dunes.
- Positive findings are that the unincorporated County has no major sewer/water, energy, or public safety facilities that are vulnerable to up to 5 feet of sea level rise.

Project Schedule:

Sea Level Rise Planning Project Phase 1 (completed):

Phase 1 began in March 2017 and concluded in September 2019 when the Board of Supervisors conducted a sea level rise work session to review the vulnerability and adaptation reports, as well as preliminary draft Local Coastal Program (LCP) policies. The Board also authorized a grant application for Phase 2 that was awarded, and the project began in May of 2020.



Sea Level Rise Planning Project Phase 2 (currently underway):

The planned submittal for certification is the final milestone in a two-phase grant-funded sea level rise planning project. Phase 2 also includes three rounds of community outreach, a community survey, and a County Interagency Working Group. The survey and working group were completed. There was a review of the Working Group results report with the Planning Commission in 2021. The remaining phases of the project are summarized below:

- April/May: Finish LCP amendment prep and conclude grant contract with Coastal Commission
- June 5th Release of Draft LCP amendments for Public Review and Zoom Outreach Meeting
- July 20th Conclude 45-day public review and begin including comments
- Fall 2024: Planning Commission hearing to recommend adoption of LCP amendments
- Early 2025: Board of Supervisors hearing for adoption of LCP amendments
- Remainder 2025: LCP Coastal Commission amendment certification hearings

Glossary

There are various planning and scientific terminologies used in the draft amendments and in the presentations. The list below may be helpful to reference when reviewing the draft amendments and during the presentations.

Planning Terms

- Sea Level Rise State Guidance: A series of non-regulatory documents that provide an overview of the best available science on sea level rise for California and recommend projections and methods for addressing sea level rise. The most recent version is the Ocean Protection Council. opc.ca.gov/2024/01/draft-slr-guidance-2024/
- Local Coastal Program (LCP): The LCP is a comprehensive planning document aimed at ensuring coastal development aligns with statewide goals for protecting coastal resources, providing public access, and balancing development with conservation. It is implemented through two main components: the Land Use Plan and the Implementation Plan.
- Land Use Plan (LUP): The County's LUP, known as the [Coastal Area Plan \(CAP\)](#), is a subset of the LCP. The CAP outlines specific goals, policies, and guidelines for development standards, land use classifications, public access, and resource protection, focusing on the North, Central, and South Coasts of the unincorporated areas.
- Implementation Plan: Is referred to as the [Coastal Zoning Ordinance \(CZO\)](#) and includes the development standards that align with the goals laid out in the CAP for the unincorporated areas.
- Ministerial Permit: A permit that is approved with minimal review of objective standards.
- Discretionary Permit: A permit that requires more review and is authorized with a public hearing.
- Community Character: Refers to the distinct identity of a place that is created with zoning standards such as height limits and setback requirements that promulgate a collective impression of a neighborhood on residents and visitors.
- Shoreline Protective Devices: Seawalls, revetments, breakwaters, and other such construction that alters natural shoreline processes. Sometimes this type of development is referred to as “coastal armor”.
- Neighborhood-scale: The LCP identifies “Existing Communities” that would be suitable for more specific sea level rise adaptation plans that combine various types of uses, resources, and development into one plan.
- Coastal Hazard Screening Area A: Found at the end of the [proposed CZO amendments](#), the screening area depicts in blue color shoreline areas that may experience flooding and storm wave run-up.
- Coastal Hazard Screening Area B: Found at the end of the [proposed CZO amendments](#), the screening area depicts in green color areas that are inland from direct waves but may still experience coastal flooding from rising tides and rising groundwater tables due to sea level rise.

Sea Level Rise Modeling and Projection Tools:

- Coastal Resilience Model: Developed by The Nature Conservancy, it examines coastal flooding and associated risks, showing impacts of sea level rise compounded with hazards like storm and fluvial flooding or coastal erosion. This model was used for the County's Vulnerability Assessment. maps.coastalresilience.org/california/
- CoSMoS Model: Coastal Storm Modeling System or CoSMoS is a sea level rise model developed by the United States Geological Survey to allow more detailed predictions of coastal flooding due to both future sea-level rise and storm integrated with long-term coastal evolution. It is generally accepted as the best available science. CoSMoS models coastal water levels including sea level rise projections, tides, groundwater, seasonal effects, river discharge and wave run-up. This model was used for the County's Adaptation Plan. ourcoastourfuture.org/hazard-map/

Scientific Terms:

- 100-year storm: A severe storm that causes large waves and/or river flooding that has a one percent chance of occurring annually. State guidance suggests including 100-year storms with sea level rise.
- Coastal Erosion: The process by which coastlines are gradually worn away and lose sediments due to the action of waves, currents, tides, and human activity.
- Compound flooding: Occurs when multiple flood drivers interact and involves a combination of coastal, fluvial (river), and pluvial (rainfall) flooding mechanisms, exacerbating the overall flood risk and impacts.
- King Tide: The highest predicted high tide(s) of the year, occurring once or twice annually and about 7 feet in height.
- Wave Run-Up: The highest point waves reach during high-energy events like storms, influenced by wave height, period, and beach slope.