



## CHAPTER 3 -- THE LAND USE PLAN: RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND POLICIES

### 3.8 TRANSPORTATION, UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

#### [Policies](#)

#### **Coastal Act Requirements**

A central concept of the Coastal Act is that development shall, if possible, occur in areas where public services are available. The major public works policy of the Act applicable to Mendocino County is the limitation on capacity improvements to Highway 1.

**30254.** New or expanded public works facilities shall be designed and limited to accommodate needs generated by development or uses permitted consistent with the provisions of this division; provided, however, that it is the intent of the Legislature that State Highway Route 1 in rural areas of the coastal zone remain a scenic two-lane road. Special districts shall not be formed or expanded except where assessment for, and provision of, the service would not induce new development inconsistent with this division. Where existing or planned public works facilities can accommodate only a limited amount of new development, services to coastal-dependent land use, essential public services and basic industries vital to the economic health of the region, state, or nation, public recreation, commercial recreation, and visitor serving land uses shall not be precluded by other development.

#### **Definitions**

**Public Works** as defined by Section 30114 of the Act as:

- (a) All production, storage, transmission, and recovery facilities for water, sewerage, telephone, and other similar utilities owned or operated by any public agency or by any utility subject to the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Commission, except for energy facilities.
- (b) All public transportation facilities, including streets, roads, highways, public parking lots and structures, ports, harbors, airports, railroads, and mass transit facilities and stations, bridges, trolley wires, and other related facilities.
- (c) All publicly financed recreational facilities, all projects of the State Coastal Conservancy, and any development by a special district.
- (d) All community college facilities.



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**Special District** (Section 30118 of the Act) means any public agency other than a local government formed pursuant to general law or a special act for the local performance of governmental or proprietary functions within limited boundaries. "Special district" includes, but is not limited to, a county service area, a maintenance district or area, an improvement district or improvement zone, or any other zone or area, formed for the purpose of designating an area within which a property tax rate will be levied to pay for a service or improvement benefiting that area.

### **Transportation, Utilities, and Public Service Issues**

The coast's ability to accommodate major new development will depend upon the availability of water and sewage disposal systems and additional capacity on Highway 1 and environmental factors. Other high-cost services--law enforcement, fire protection, and education--though provided most efficiently for a compact pattern of development, more easily spread to include new development. The Land Use Plan does not allocate new development on the basis of available law enforcement, fire protection, or educational services.

### **Highway 1 Limitations**

The Coastal Act's requirement that the highway "in rural areas of the coastal zone remain a scenic two-lane road" (Section 30254) imposes definite, but not easily determined, restraints on development. At present, the highway has only two lanes, except for a short, four-lane segment through Mendocino Town and a continuous left-turn lane between Fort Bragg and Boice Lane north of Jug Handle Creek and partially through the town of Fort Bragg. Highway 1 is the major existing or potential route serving most trips made along the Mendocino coast by residents, visitors, and local commerce and industry.

The Highway 1 Capacity Study (#14 California Coastal Commission) was prepared in 1979 as a tool for coastal planning in Marin, Sonoma, and Mendocino Counties. The study offers some possibilities for increasing capacity and describes alternative minimum levels of service, and along with Caltrans policies, has been used as one basis for reaching certain assumptions. The Highway 1 Capacity Study shall be cited as a reference and placed in the bibliography.

The highway study was evaluated and alternative assumptions were tested. Whether the 5th, the 30th, or 130th hour is used for consideration, the peak hour will occur between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. on summer Sundays with the exception of the Fort Bragg area which might indicate that the peak hour could be reached on a weekday afternoon in the summer.

The county reviewed the Highway Capacity Study and extrapolated data to mitigate to an acceptable level any adverse cumulative impacts, consistent with Section 30001(d) of the Coastal Act which states, "That existing developed uses, and future developments that are carefully planned and developed consistent with the policies of this division, are essential to the economic



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and social well-being of the people of this state and especially to working persons employed within the coastal zone."

The adoption of those resource policies contained in the County General Plan for LCP Land Use Classifications of Agriculture Land, Forest Land, and Range Lands, the application of 50% buildout, the no new parcels smaller than average size, the proof of water on each new parcel, the requirements for long term septage disposal, specific Coastal Act requirements and LCP Policies are designed to assess future demands on highway use allocations and will further reduce the adverse cumulative impacts of land use decisions in the LCP consistent with Section 30001(d).

Probably the greatest development limiting planning factor in the land use plan is the availability of water, closely followed by the limit on septic waste systems. These two factors plus highway capacity and other known planning constraints have been considered.

Traffic projection is at best an inexact science because of variable uncontrollable factors. At some point, however, additional development could result in congestion causing the significant, cumulative adverse impacts prohibited by Section 30250 of the Act.

There are a number of variables that could change travel patterns and thus affect available capacity on Highway 1. Some are unpredictable; some will depend on national, state, or local public policy. Such factors include:

**Travel demand.** Higher gasoline prices or gasoline shortages could reduce travel or divert it to the Mendocino coast from more distant recreation destinations. Recreational travel is assumed to increase at 3 percent, uncompounded, per year during the next 20 years.

**Travel Mode.** Although tour bus passenger volumes are increasing, the potential for diverting visitor trips from cars to buses is less than in many other recreation areas. The Mendocino coast attracts visitors not because of any one destination point (such as Yosemite), but because people like to drive along the length of the coast, admiring the spectacular scenery.

**Household composition and use.** If new development on the coast includes a high proportion of second homes, weekend travel will increase. On the other hand, if a high proportion of new residents are retirees, peak hour travel per housing unit will decline.

**Amount of Improvement.** For maximum highway capacity, the optimum roadbed width would be 36 feet: each side consisting of 12 foot lane with a 6 foot paved shoulder. If Highway 1 were improved to these standards, capacity increases would range from 6 percent near Gibney Lane to 54 percent at most locations south of Van Damme State Park (#14, California Coastal Commission). A bridge at Dark Gulch and massive earth moving around Navarro Head probably would be required. However, developing the highway for maximum capacity would not be consistent with the environmental policies of the Coastal Act. Current Caltrans policy is to build



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a 32-foot section--12-foot lanes and 4-foot paved shoulders, where feasible. The Land Use Plan designates 12-foot lanes, and 4-foot shoulders except where topography and absence of development close to the road pose few problems. The minimum width of the bikeways (see Policy 3.6-20) must be 4 feet.

**Development Between Pudding Creek and Hare Creek.** No improvement of Highway 1-Highway 20 intersection is scheduled. Approval of major development proposals near the intersection should be contingent upon an agreement among Caltrans, the City of Fort Bragg, and the County on an intersection design that matches capacity and development intensity.

A detailed study of long-term north-south highway capacity needs in the Fort Bragg area is needed. A design for the Highway 20 intersection should be based on clear policies for the future of the Noyo and Hare Creek bridges and for any other continuous north-south route.

### **Water Supply**

Community water supply and sewage disposal systems are described in Table 3.8-3 (See Appendix A5-1). Community water systems rely mainly on surface water sources, as ground water is not usually available in sufficient supply to serve high density residential development.

A community water system may be needed for the Town of Mendocino to serve further residential and commercial expansion in accord with the Town Plan. The feasibility of continued development in the Town with a well on each lot has not been demonstrated. However, development of surface water (probably requiring treatment) or wells and a public distribution system would be an unwelcome cost for those who now own dependable wells.

Domestic water supplies are mainly groundwater, which is available in sufficient quantity at most, but not all locations for low-density residential development. Lots at Iverson Road have been unbuildable because wells are not productive, and some wells in Mendocino Town, and other coastal areas are unreliable, necessitating hauling water during the late summer and fall of dry years. The California Department of Water Resources, in cooperation with the California Coastal Commission, and the County of Mendocino has initiated a groundwater monitoring program as part of a Coastal-wide groundwater study. This study is continuing, however a report entitled Mendocino County Coastal Groundwater Study, was published in 1982, which establishes areas of Sufficient, Marginal, Critical, and Critical Bedrock Water Resource areas, and recommends Land Use Densities in these areas. As more data is collected, these areas could change; however, this report currently represents the best available data on development constraints due to groundwater.

That the Board of Supervisors, having considered the Highway 1 Capacity Study and the Coastal Groundwater Study and recognize the need for further study into highway capacity and water



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availability, adopt the land use density as shown on the maps adopted by the Planning Commission as a 20-year goal.

Land divisions and development of existing parcels may proceed in accordance with the adopted maps while the studies are being conducted. This interim development should not exceed acceptable levels as there is no factual basis for anticipating buildout of existing and/or newly created parcels at an increased rate over that of the preceding years which has occurred at a rate of 2-3% per year.

Areas designated on the LCP maps as having a variable density zoning classification, which are proposed for greater density by the development of a surface water supply, shall be required to have adequate engineering, proof of water during the dry season, and operation of the system by a duly licensed Water Treatment Plant Operator of the proper grade. As the County completes its Coastal Groundwater Study, greater densities may be allowable within the variable density zoning classifications.

Those areas, utilizing groundwater, and proposed for development to a greater density than recommended in the June 1982 Coastal Groundwater Study shall be required to have a hydrological report prepared by a qualified person which addresses the adequacy of the proposed water supply (proof of water), the direct effects on adjacent and surrounding water users, and the cumulative

adverse impacts of the development on the regional water supply.

### **FINDINGS**

**Water Availability** Groundwater capabilities shown in the Groundwater Study indicate the need to encourage the lower densities (parcels less than five acres in size) within service delivery areas and be provided for by special district or development funding. Application of the Coastal Groundwater Study is addressed by Policy 3.8-9.

**Highway Capacity** Present Highway 1 use indicates that present and increased density may result in delays and temporary discomfort of travel in the urban areas. However, the text recognizes that traffic projection is an inexact science and, given the current available information, it is difficult to predict when and where these delays would occur.

It should be noted that the Coastal Commission staff has stated that traffic in the City of Fort Bragg reaches its peak on weekdays instead of weekends and, in the staff's opinion, adequate capacity is available to accommodate recreational travelers. (Reference: Coastal Commission Staff Comments, City of Fort Bragg LCP, January 15, 1982).



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Finally, in agreement with local residents, the Board of Supervisors believes that the Highway 1 Capacity Study tends to place densities and population in areas that are more valuable in their present state for agriculture and timber resource value and for the protection of other coastal resources.

Further study and monitoring of Highway 1 capacity and use are addressed in Policies 3.8-3 and 3.8-4. The Board recognizes that the 1979 Highway Capacity Study used only one site in Mendocino County, the intersection of Route 1 and Route 128, for an in-depth survey to determine the percentage of visitor traffic, and that such surveys should be conducted on other segments of Highway 1.

The land use maps as adopted by the Board of Supervisors would allow additional new dwelling units in the Fort Bragg Reach and new units in the Point Arena Reach. While this amount of development would increase traffic, the traffic even at full buildout would not increase to that allowed by the Highway 1 Study using the fifth highest hour. (Reference Highway 1 Study, Table VIII-2 of June 1979). Using this table all segments within the reaches could accommodate development in excess of that allowed by the plan maps with the exception of the "hub" within the city limits of Fort Bragg. This "hub" segment experiences congestion as does any urban area and according to the study any additional development would adversely affect this "hub" segment, however, the Fort Bragg LCP as certified by the California Coastal Commission made findings "that there is adequate highway capacity to accommodate recreational travelers, that no need exists to reserve excess capacity for recreational travelers and that peak local traffic does not occur during or directly compete with peak recreational traffic".

During the life of the plan, the Board will recognize the Urban/Rural boundaries of Fort Bragg to extend west of Pearl Drive from Highway 1 and east of Highway 1 on that line extending on Boice Lane and north to Cleone. The first priority for additional development will be encouraged in this area. The second priority for development will be in those areas where the groundwater study shows that there is sufficient groundwater. Development patterns will be closely monitored and an annual report made to the Board. The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors will ask for review of highway conditions every 5 years, and request that by 1985 a new highway capacity study be conducted by Caltrans. The Board of Supervisors may establish fees to provide for lateral accesses east of Highway 1.

Improvements to Highway 1 and use of alternate routes are addressed in Policies 3.8-2, 3.8-5 and 3.8-6.

### **SEWAGE DISPOSAL**

#### **Public Sewerage Systems**



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The cities of Fort Bragg and Point Arena, and the towns of Mendocino, Westport, Anchor Bay and Gualala are served by publicly operated sewage collection, treatment, and disposal systems. In 1983 the City of Fort Bragg's sewage system operated at 70% of capacity. It is the only sewage system with capacity to serve significant additional growth in the Fort Bragg area, such as the Todd's Point (already a part of the Fort Bragg Municipal Improvement District) and south of Hare Creek near Simpson Lane. Substantial growth could also be accommodated within the city and in areas north of Pudding Creek that may be annexed.

In 1983 the Mendocino sewage system was operating at about 66% of capacity, and with a projected population increase under the Land Use Plan, increased visitor use, and a potential for higher per capita water use if a community water system is built, indicates that other than minor annexations to the district is not justified.

The Westport sewage system, and the Point Arena sewage system are not sized to accept significant growth from outside existing district (or City) boundaries. The community system serving Anchor Bay as of 1983 is inadequate even for current flows, and repairs currently under consideration will not allow for growth outside existing Anchor Bay Water Works #2 boundaries. The Anchor Bay system is currently operating under a cease and desist order, and a new hookup moratorium imposed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board, will remain in place until the system is brought up to standard.

The Gualala Community Services District (GCSD) sewer treatment system was designed to serve existing development and additional growth within the GCSD Sewer Assessment District boundary (as approved / / ). The system was designed to accommodate annual increases of residential growth at a constant rate of 2 percent for a twenty (20) year planning horizon. This was in conformance with population increases projected in Policy 3.9 (Locating and Planning New Development) of between 0.5 and 2.4 percent. Annual increases in commercial development were projected at 3 percent for the twenty (20) year planning period.

Requests for sewer service outside the existing GCSD Sewer Assessment District boundary, but within the approved Gualala Community Services District boundary, shall be subject to environmental review of development-related impacts, and may require an amendment of the county Land Use Plan.

### **ON-SITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL**

Most of the Mendocino County Coast depends upon individual on-site septic tank - soil absorption system (ST-SAS). These systems can function for many years, provided they are properly designed, and installed in an appropriate site that meets all of the requirements of law, and pumped out every 3 - 5 years. There are areas with severe restraints with respect to on-site sewage disposal systems, e.g. the Pygmy Forest areas, and areas of extremely high winter-time water tables; however, the land's suitability for on-site sewage disposal must be evaluated on a



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parcel by parcel basis. Recent advances in alternative on-site sewage technology can mitigate some, but not all of the constraints found on coastal parcels.

The Coast's on-site sewage disposal systems generally are functioning adequately. However, some areas, such as the area south of Fort Bragg near Simpson Lane, have been identified as areas where additional growth could cause adverse cumulative impacts. These areas are identified in a Water Quality Control Board document entitled "Final Report-Assessment of Cumulative Impacts of Individual Waste Treatment and Disposal Systems", February 1982. Procedures contained therein for assessing cumulative effects will be followed in approving new development in the above-mentioned areas.

### **SEPTAGE DISPOSAL**

A primary problem along the coast is Septage, the material that accumulates in septic tanks and must be periodically pumped out and disposed of. Before 1980, almost all septage was disposed of at coastal sewage treatment plants, with a very small amount being spread onto agricultural land. Since 1980, however, when the City of Fort Bragg began a phase-out of accepting septage and with the other sewage treatment plants unable to accept it, more emphasis has been placed onto land disposal. Several soil amendment projects which utilize septage as a fertilizer and a soil amendment have been approved; the Mendocino Coast is currently served by such facilities. These coastal sites have the capacity to handle septage generated on the coast for the foreseeable future. As privately operated facilities, they do not have the same inherent guarantee of long-term operation as does a publicly operated facility. The County has been negotiating with the operators to establish a contract to assure long-term future operation of these sites.

The County, recognizing the potential problems with septage disposal, has included a County-wide Septage Study for 1983-84, in their County Solid Waste Master Plan update.