

ISSUE:

Defining a principal structure size that constitutes a “reasonable use” for legal lots that are vacant or developed with older, smaller principal structures.

COASTAL LAND USE PLAN POLICY REFERENCES:

4.1-18, 5.1-36, and 5.1-37

BACKGROUND:

Most of the land in the City’s Coastal Zone is either dedicated open space or developed, with very little vacant land remaining. Furthermore, development on the few remaining vacant lots is often constrained by topography, biological resources, or hazards. The Coastal Land Use Plan (LUP) contains biological protection and hazard avoidance/reduction policies which, when applied to constrained legal lots, may result in no reasonable use of the property outside of minimum required buffers.

To define “reasonable use” for lots either vacant or developed with older, smaller principal structures, City staff considered the following:

- Statistics for lots located in the Potential Shoreline Hazards Screening Areas 3 and 4 (Coastal Bluff Faces and Coastal Bluff Tops)¹ (see attached map).
 - Vacant: 12 lots
 - Developed with single family residences: 122
 - Minimum sq.ft.: 850
 - Maximum sq.ft.: 21,666
 - Median sq.ft.: 2,266
 - Average sq.ft.: 2,748
 - 3 lots have structures less than 1,200 sq.ft.
- Statistics for lots located adjacent to Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas, wetlands, and creeks are anticipated to be similar to those above.
- Statistics for the median and average size of new single unit houses for years 1973 and 2017².
 - Median sq.ft.: 1973=1,575, 2017=2,398
 - Average sq.ft.: 1973=1,715, 2017=2,548
- Notwithstanding scenic view protection policies, Policy 4.3-7 states that, “Development shall be sited and designed to be compatible with the character of surrounding areas...” Typically, the City’s Single Family Design Review Board reviews submittal requirements including a street silhouette elevation, panoramic streetscape photo and the 20 Closest Home Survey. The 20 Closest Home Survey compares the Floor Area Ratios of the 20 closest homes in the area which helps the Board understand the neighborhood compatibility in terms of square footage

¹ County of Santa Barbara Clerk-Recorder-Assessor & Elections Mapping Division. Note: This information may or may not include garage space. Parcels listed as 1,200 sq.ft. or smaller were compared to the City’s permit database and refined as necessary.

² US Census Median and Average Square Feet of Floor Area in New Single-Family Houses Completed by Location (West). <https://www.census.gov/construction/chars/pdf/squarefeet.pdf>

of floor area. The panoramic streetscape photo and street silhouette help the Board evaluate the compatibility of the mass, bulk and scale with the immediate neighborhood.

- California Accessory Dwelling Unit law requires that detached Accessory Dwelling Units shall not exceed 1,200 square feet³.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of establishing a definition of “reasonable use” for lots either vacant or developed with older, smaller principal structures is to avoid claims of takings of private property.

The allowance for a principal structure of up to 1,200 sq.ft. would not apply in most cases due to the limited number of legal lots that are vacant or developed with principal structures less than 1,200 sq.ft. In cases where the allowance for a principal structure of up to 1,200 sq.ft. would apply, the policies also require other findings to be made and processes to be followed that may restrict the principal structure size to less than 1, 200 sq.ft.

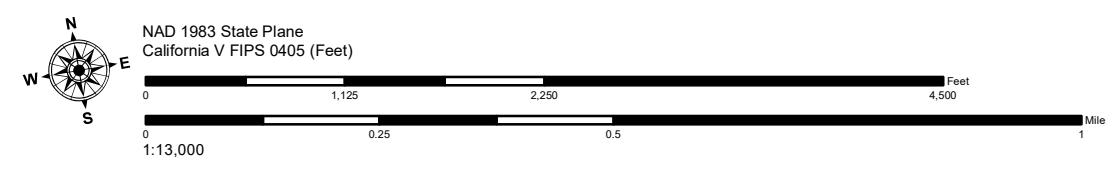
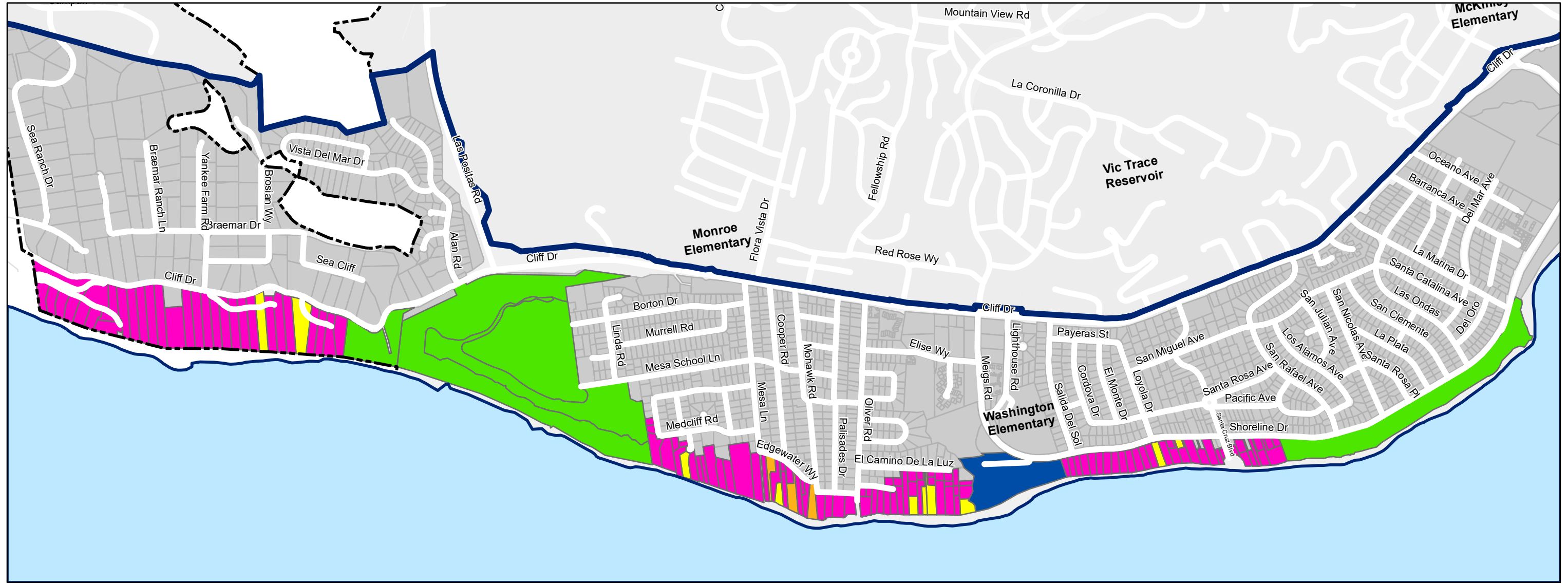
Notwithstanding other Coastal Act and LCP requirements, 1,200 sq.ft. is allowed for Accessory Dwelling Units on lots already developed with a principal residential structure.

A 1,200 sq.ft structure is approximately half the average square footage of existing principal residential structures located in Potential Shoreline Hazards Areas 3 and 4 and anticipated to be located adjacent to ESHAs, wetlands, and creeks, and approximately half the US Census Median and Average Square Feet of Floor Area in New Single-Family Houses Completed by Location (for the Western US in 2017). Principal structures 50% of the square footage of nearby development can be designed to be compatible. But a principal structure vastly different as to mass, bulk, and scale (less than 50% of the square footage of nearby development), may be found incompatible and/or out of character with the surrounding development.

Attachment: Estimated Size of Structures Located on Parcels

³ CA Government Code §65852.2

ESTIMATED SIZE OF STRUCTURES LOCATED ON PARCELS WITHIN COASTAL BLUFF HAZARD SCREENING AREAS



- BOUNDARIES**
- Boundaries
 - - - City Limits
- ESTIMATED STRUCTURE SIZE**
- NA - Park (5 parcels)
 - NA - US Coast Guard (1 parcel)
 - NA - Vacant (12 parcels)
 - < 1,200 sqft (3 parcels)
 - 1,200 sqft or greater (119 parcels)

Note:
A parcel along the City's easterly boundary ("Bellosguardo") is unmapped and within the Coastal Bluff Hazard Screening Area. However, the structures on this parcel are larger than 1,200 sqft in size.

This map was created using the County of Santa Barbara Assessor's Parcel GIS data. All parcels listed in the County's dataset as being 1,200 sqft or smaller were compared to the City's permit tracking system and plan archives to verify the accuracy of the County's dataset. Where conflicts occurred, the City's information was mapped.

WORKING DRAFT