CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY MONTEREY BAY
Department of Health, Human Services & Public Policy

APPLIED POLICY ANALYSIS PROJECT

Land Use in Big Sur: In search of Sustainable Balance between Community Needs and Resource Protection

Submitted in Partial Satisfaction of the Requirements
For the Masters in Public Policy Degree

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ABSTRACT

The Big Sur Local Coastal Plan (LCP) was certified in 1986 by the California Coastal Commission to implement of the 1972 federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). The LCP was intended to provide comprehensive policy guidance to balance the development needs of area property owners and the local community with resource protection and public recreation over time. This study examines the observable results of twenty years experience with these policies in terms of stakeholder concerns about population, housing, community and civic activities, economics, land use, aesthetics, recreation, biodiversity and natural systems, and evaluates the potential effects of changing or updating the LCP.

Keywords: Big Sur, land use, coastal resources, local coastal plan, California Coastal Commission, CZMA

Cover photo: K. Ekelund 2005

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Executive Summary

The future of the spectacular region of California's central coast called Big Sur depends on establishing a stable, sustainable and balanced way to protect community needs and the natural environment while providing appropriate public access opportunities. A theoretical such balance was created by the Big Sur Local Coastal Plan (LCP), adopted in 1986. This plan imposed strict limits on development of all sorts. It was intended to limit all private, public and commercial development to no more than a calculated maximum sustainable level supporting both public and private priorities.

This Plan has now been in effect for over 20 years. As decision makers consider whether to leave it unchanged, adjust it slightly or completely renegotiate it, it seems helpful to evaluate its effectiveness. To that end, this study considers the LCP's consequences both in terms of concrete and measurable outcomes and subjective aspects of concern to a wide range of stakeholders. Included are discussions of population numbers and demographics, the health of community and civic activities, local economic considerations, land use and land ownership trends, aesthetic and recreational concerns, and biodiversity and the health of natural systems.

The results of this examination of available information, though hampered by data shortfalls and discrepancies, indicate that while the LCP has generally succeeded in accomplishing its articulated goals there is a need to change some provisions. The focus of development planning must now shift from implementing large scale projects to achieve LCP goals towards maintaining a long-term sustainable balance among uses. This is in part because of the LCP's successes. In addition, important implementation considerations have surfaced and some conditions have changed. These matters, too, should be addressed. However, there are significant barriers to accomplishing such changes in a productive manner. Given these challenges, policy recommendations focus on developing a process for overcoming such barriers in the long term while correcting implementing challenges in the more immediate term.

In the larger sense, it is hoped that this examination of Big Sur's 20-year experience with coastal planning will offer insights into the larger challenge of supporting balanced, sustainable, and diverse communities within significant resource constraints when significant growth in any sector is not possible.

Introduction

Many people are apprehensive about the future of Big Sur. Some believe that the ongoing existence of a viable resident community is threatened. A significant number of residents express concern that community and civic activities increasingly lack participants and resources, and that the sense of community that sustains and supports traditional area lifestyles and character is fading. Suspected causes include diminishing population, reduced housing opportunities, and other economic factors. In addition, many believe that land use and ownership trends are significant contributing factors to these perceived problems. Community activists suggest that the main source of these concerns is the cumulative effect of current restrictive land use policies.

At the same time many people and institutions are concerned that continuing development will erode the unspoiled natural character of the area and damage sensitive and in some cases unique natural systems. Some are concerned about the durability of long-term protection for the area's unique natural attributes, in particular aesthetics and scenery, bio-diversity, and the ongoing health of natural habitats and ecosystems. Further, there is a significant constituency for ensuring that recreational access to the area is available to as many people as possible. Advocates for these priorities express concern that current policies are inadequately protective of these interests.

Balancing these concerns in a way that is fair to all parties and sustainable over the long term presents a significant ongoing public policy challenge. Past policy efforts, particularly during the last half of the 20th century, have addressed these issues in innovative ways. As of 2006, the current policies governing land use have been in effect essentially unchanged for 20 years.

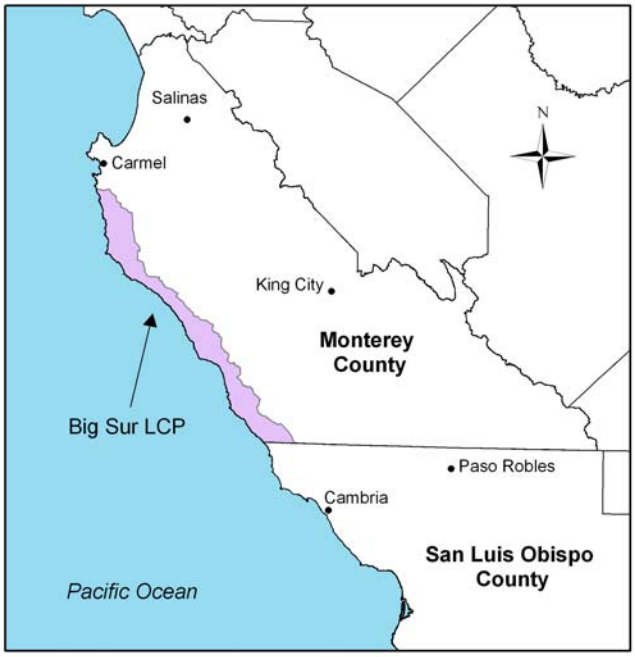
How is this working? An examination of the outcomes of these efforts could guide future policy development not only in Big Sur but in other coastal regions.

Background

Where/what is Big Sur?

Big Sur is a spectacularly scenic unincorporated area along California's central coast, and is generally taken to mean the coastal section of the Santa Lucia Mountains between the Carmel River in the north and Cambria to the south, ranging from the Pacific Ocean on the west inland to the

Figure 1



Source: map by K. Ekelund / Monterey County GIS database as of 12/06/2005

western edge of the Salinas Valley. For the purposes of this study however, the term 'Big Sur' will specifically refer to that portion of Monterey County's Big Sur Planning Area that is regulated by the Big Sur Local Coastal Plan, as shown in purple on Figure 1. This area begins at Mal Paso Creek south of the Carmel Highlands and extends southwards to the Monterey /San Luis Obispo County line, between the Pacific Ocean and the Coast Ridge divide. This 234-square mile area is approximately 70 miles long and averages 3.3 miles in width.

Past Policy Efforts

There have been many attempts to manage land use in Big Sur. The first National Forest Reserve was enacted here in 1909. This marked the beginning of modern public efforts to preserve the iconic natural landscape and influence its future use and development. Significant initiatives continued, reaching a peak during the 1970's and 1980's when Senator Alan Cranston - followed by State Senator Fred Farr, Congressman Leon Panetta and Senator Pete Wilson - all tried to enact legislation to designate significant portions of Big Sur as federal entity of some sort, most recently as a National Scenic Area or a Big Sur Area.[1]

While some residents supported these efforts, these legislative initiatives also galvanized local opposition. These differences of opinion divided the community, and continue to color debates to the present time. Proponents argued that comprehensive oversight, management and funding necessary to truly protect the area from development could only be accomplished at the federal level, while opponents characterized legislation as 'federalization', and believed that the eventual result of such action would be to increase federal oversight of area activities to an unacceptable level, to reduce local control, and eventually to eliminate private residential and commercial uses from the area completely. Understandably, these latter ideas were unpopular with many residents, who care deeply about their homes and property rights, and who consider themselves good stewards of the land. These intensely held concerns linger today, underlying and adding emotional weight to most public conversations about land use.

The resulting ten year conflict included political battles engaged in Washington D.C., Sacramento, Salinas and locally. Eventually however opposition efforts prevailed and formal federalization efforts were halted. One convincing argument opponents used was that during this period Monterey County adopted a new General Plan for land use, including an area section specifically governing Big Sur, called the Big Sur Land Use Plan, which was said to provide the essential protections and benefits federal oversight was intended to address.[2]

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[1] Both these proposals were for comprehensive federal management of the area under the U.S. Forest Service. C. Marvinney's 1984 UCLA Journal of Environmental Law and Policy article, *Land Use Policy Along the Big Sur Coast of California; What Role for the Federal Government*, provides a good contemporary account of the policy discussions around these legislative questions.

[2] A good general retrospective overview of this process was written by V. Hennessey and published in Monterey Herald on April 18, 2004: complete text is available on the CPOA website**,** http://www.cpoabigsur.org/Archive/Big_Sur_Articles/In-Big_Sur_war_waged_over_land.html

This local Plan was certified in 1986 by the newly established California Coastal Commission (CCC) under the authority of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA)[3], which authorized coastal states to create plans to comprehensively address coastal resource management. California did this, adopting the California Coastal Act in 1976 (the Coastal Act)[4] . Subsequently, Monterey County created and adopted a local coastal program, made up of the four land use area plans corresponding to the four different coastal regions of the County[5]. These sections were intended to provide specific local policy direction appropriate to local conditions in order to carry out the larger intent of the Acts.

The section pertaining to Big Sur is titled "*The Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan, Local Coastal Program, Monterey County, California"*. It is generally referred to as either the Big Sur Local Coastal Plan (LCP) or the Big Sur Land Use Plan (LUP)[6]. This policy document was then implemented through another document, the Big Sur Coastal Implementation Plan (CIP), which contains the specific rules for how the LCP policies are to be applied in practice. In addition, several other stand-alone policy documents were incorporated as part of the LCP, in particular the Big Sur River and Little Sur River Protected Waterway Management Plans[7]. These policy documents together provide the current legal standard regulating how land in Big Sur may be used.

The entire Monterey County LCP and the California Coastal Act were both subsequently certified by the federal authorities, creating the composite California Coastal Management Program. This policy framework allows Monterey County's Big Sur LCP to guide the actions of federal agencies operating in the area as well individuals and state and local government entities. By certifying the LCP as the local articulation of of the CZMA, federal agency management adopted it as the governing rules for their activities in the area. Therefore their activities, as well as those of local and state agencies, NGOs, and private landowners of all kinds, must be consistent with the LCP. This complex process was implemented because LCP provisions are expressly intended to direct the activities of all residents, landowners, businesses and governmental entities with respect to land use in order to provide a single comprehensive framework to achieve an overall consistent and sustainable balance among competing priorities.

The Big Sur LCP was created in an unusual collaborative process including community and public sector participants. This process was facilitated in part by then-Congressman Leon Panetta, in response to community concern about proposed federalization legislation. It contains a wide variety of protections for the natural environment and significant restrictions on overall development and land use throughout

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[3] "In recognition of the increasing pressures of development on the nation's coastal resources, Congress enacted the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) in 1972 and has amended it several times (16 U.S.C. 1450 *et seq.*)" Per http://homer.ornl.gov/oepa/laws/czma.html

[4] Complete text available at http://www.coastal.ca.gov/coastact.pdf

[5] The four unincorporated areas covered by local coastal plans are North County Coastal, Del Monte Forest, Carmel/Carmel Highlands, and Big Sur.

[6] This report will use the term LCP. This term should be taken to refer to the entire package of associated Big Sur documents unless otherwise specified.

[7] Complete text available at http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/pbi/docs/plans/landuse.htm

Big Sur, while preserving opportunities for limited residential, commercial and recreational uses in specified areas, generally areas already developed to some extent.

The Big Sur LCP is widely regarded as one of the most restrictive documents of its kind anywhere. In spite of this, it was able to achieve wide support because it was perceived as a social contract in which no party is fully satisfied, but which could be accepted by all parties because it was a fair agreement arrived at fairly, which fairly distributed necessary burdens and restrictions on development and use of both private and public property. The LCP has not been significantly amended since certification in 1986[8].

In addition to spelling out specific land use and development restrictions, the Big Sur LCP also created the policy framework resulting in the creation of the Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council (BSMAAC). This body was formed to provide ongoing coordination among the many different public agencies active in the area and to allow residents a single forum for addressing concerns that often span multiple jurisdictions. The BSMAAC meets quarterly and includes elected representatives, appointed citizen representatives, and representatives of all public agencies involved with land management and regulation in the area. BSMAAC meetings provide a unique face-to-face opportunity for information sharing and problem solving. It is an unusually direct example of representative government, and provides an extraordinarily valuable resource through which to address issues facing the community.

The BSMAAC is specifically intended to provide a setting in which to resolve conflicts about the implementation of the LCP. For the past several years though, BSMAAC meetings have become mired in repetitive controversy without being able to arrive at solutions. Local citizens articulate their perception of the threat to the community posed by increased public acquisition of private lands to the exclusion of other issues, and accusations of wrongdoing on the part of government agencies and conservation NGO's have dominated most meetings. Agency participants reiterate that they are managing their responsibilities to benefit their wider constituencies according to their missions.

One goal of this study is therefore to collect the best available information about current Big Sur conditions with respect to areas of concern, in order to provide a basis for productive discussions and thereby help all involved jointly identify and explore potential areas of common interest.

[8] The only amendment is one adopted in 1996 changing the timing of required reports with respect to water supply. For comparison, the Carmel LCP has 8 amendments since its certification in 1983, while the North County LCP lists 13 amendments since it was certified in 1982. Both these latter plans have amended the land use designations and maps originally adopted.

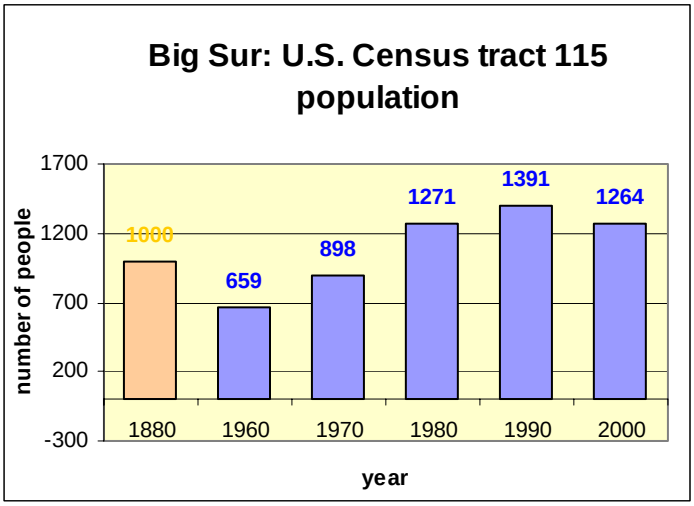
What do we know about perceived areas of threat?

Is the resident population changing?

Reliable population data are extremely hard to come by. Big Sur is poorly counted, in part because the area is not consistently defined and in part because much of the area consists of very rugged terrain extremely sparsely populated by people who value their privacy highly, making data collection challenging[9].

Numerical data derived from the U.S. Decennial Census 1960 through 2000 are shown in the chart included as Figure 2. These data do not indicate that significant changes in population numbers are occurring beyond the historical occupancy range. Examination of other available data supports this conclusion, while clarifying that 1990 & 2000 census counts for census tract 115 are probably 350-450 persons low because the area south of Esalen is no longer included in census tract 115 as presently defined[10]. Review of data also strongly suggests the need for more consistent and comprehensive data collection over time.

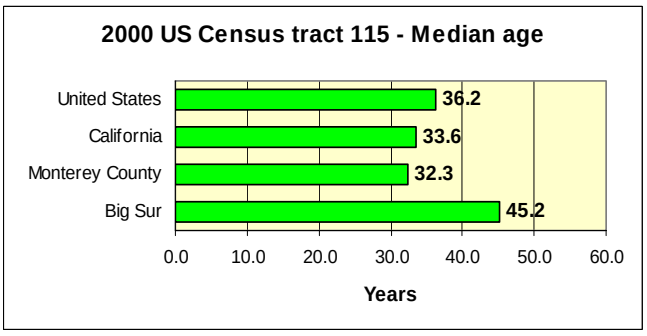
Figure 2



Source: U.S. Census decennial population, Census Tract 115. Created by author from U.S. Census data.

In addition to population numbers, changing population demographics can affect community perceptions of involvement and connectedness. For example, as shown in Figure 3 it appears that the population is aging, and the number of children decreasing. The 2000 Census reports the median age in census tract 115 was 45.2 years, significantly higher than the county median age of 32.3, state median age of 33.3, and a nation-wide median age of 36.2, and increased 44% from the 1980 median age of 31.2 recorded for census tract 115. The census also

Figure 3



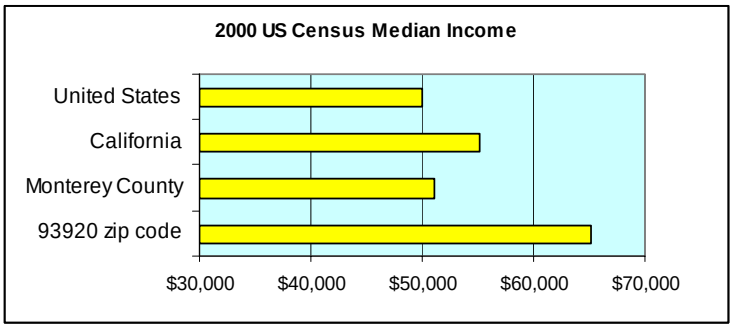
Source: Created by author from U.S. Census data.

[9] For a more complete discussion of population data details and details of the uncertainties involved with population enumeration in the area see appendix 1.

[10] Census tract 115 changed boundaries between the 1980 & 1990 counts. See Appendix 1 for details.

reports falling numbers of persons under the age of 18: the 1990 census shows 270 such persons in census tract 115 while the 2000 census shows 225, a reduction of 16.7% in that ten-year period.

Figure 4



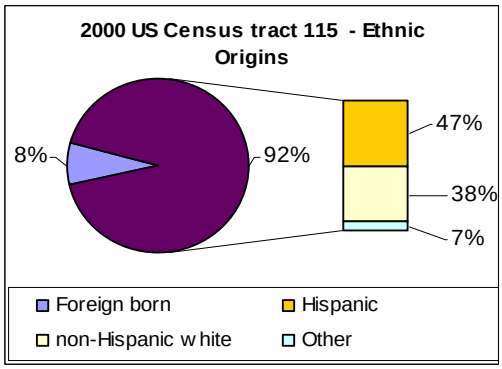
Source: Created by author from U.S. Census data.

In addition, the average Big Sur family appears to be getting richer. As shown in Figure 4, median annual family income in the 93920 zip code area is reported as $65,083[11], significantly higher than the $51,169 average for Monterey County as a whole, or the $50,046 U.S. overall average.

With respect to national origin, of the 1264 people reported in Big Sur by the 2000 U.S. Census, 107 were foreign born. Of those, 59 originally came from Latin America or Canada, while 29 were originally from Europe. Sixty-three were not currently U.S. citizens. Of those born in the United States, approximately 53% self-identify as having Hispanic ethnic background (47% of total residents) while 42% claim non-Hispanic white ethnic heritage (see Figure 5). This compares fairly consistently with a county-wide average of 51%, while both contrast to the national average of 14.2% of native born residents claiming Hispanic backgrounds.

Further illustrating current demographics and illuminating demographic trends, school enrollment for Captain Cooper Elementary School[12] in 2005-06 shows that students claiming Hispanic ethnic background make up about 60% of those enrolled, which is a higher percentage of elementary aged children than of the census tract population as a whole (47%). This also represents a significant increase from the approximately 5% of students with Hispanic ethnic backgrounds reported in 1980. Twenty-seven of 72 students (37.5%) cite English as a second language, and state that Spanish is the most common alternate language spoken at home. This compares with a county average of 48% and a state average of 32% for the same period.

Figure 5



Source: Created by author from U.S. Census data.

[11] Income data in 1999 dollars.

[12] The largest public school in the area serving K-5. Big Sur also contains Pacific Valley School, K-12, and Big Sur Charter School, K-12 as well as the Apple Pie Preschool, co-located with Captain Cooper School, and the Gazebo School, a private pre-school and day care center at the Esalen Institute.

Additionally, 37% of students are classified as low-income, as compared to a county average of 69% and a state average of 48%, while 59% of students have parents who have attended college as contrasted with 45% county-wide, and 53% state-wide. School enrollment at Captain Cooper has varied between 45-85 students during the past 26 years and projections for the next two years remain within the 65-70 student range currently served.[13]

Figure 6

2002 class at Apple Pie Preschool, located at Captain Cooper School campus
Source: Captain Cooper School website, http://www.captaincooper.org/ used by permission

The Big Sur Charter School, started in 1997, reports 25 students enrolled as of April 2006. Of these, 10 live outside Big Sur. All are reported to be native English speakers.[14] Pacific Valley School, a K-12 public school serving the widely dispersed residents of the Couth Coast, enrolled 33 students in 1997 while the enrollment for the 2005 school year is reported as 22, of whom 21 are native English speakers.

Summarizing the available population and demographic information then, it seems reasonable to conclude that population of the study area as a whole has varied between 1200 and 1800 during the past 30 years. There is no indication of a significant overall permanent numerical population changes or trend within this period, though separate sub-areas may be experiencing significant changes on a local scale. For the region as a whole, population numbers can best be described as relatively stable over time, with current numbers slightly below the highest recorded level. A realistic current estimate of study area population is around 1700. Extrapolating from that estimate, 850 would be more than 45.2 years old, and 799 would claim Hispanic backgrounds. The population is aging and average family size and the number of persons under the age of 18 are decreasing. Median family incomes and the percentage of the population of Hispanic ethnic background are increasing.

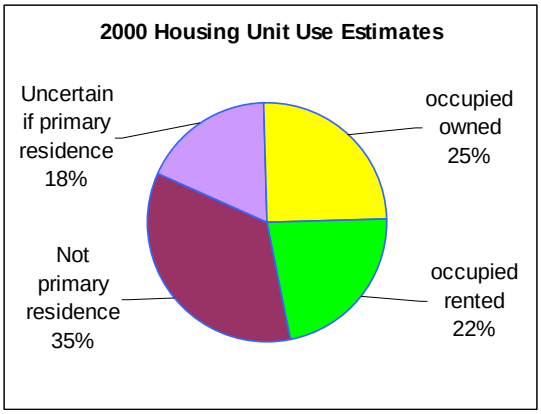
Are housing opportunities changing?

According to the California Coastal Commission (1977), there were 512 residential units in the planning area as of March 1976,[15] an increase of 62 units from the 450 listed by the U.S. Census in 1970. The 2000 U.S. Census lists 535 occupied housing units in census tract 115, of which 303 were owner-occupied and 272 were occupied by renters. However since it is unclear whether these latter statistics reflect only occupied housing units or total existing housing units, comparisons cannot be taken to offer conclusive information.

[13] Per 04/10/06 e-mail correspondence with M. Franco, Principal
[14] Per 04/18.06 e-mail correspondence with T. Creamer, Administrator
[15] The study specifies that this total did not include group quarters at the U.S. Naval Facility at Point Sur, now closed, or those located at the Esalen Institute.

These data contrast with 1996 County studies for the General Plan Update (GPU) process which reported 1214 total housing units in the Planning Area based on examinations of County assessor's data. If these later numbers are roughly correct and the census figures only count occupied units, approximately 535 of the 1214 total existing units, or slightly over half (53%), were not being used as primary residences in 2000. This calculation is higher than the 2000 census estimate for the 93920 zip code area, which gives a 36% rate for houses not occupied as primary residences. (For occupied housing units, 45.5% are listed as owner occupied and 54.5% are occupied by renters). Given these uncertainties, it is probably most reasonable to conclude that the actual overall rate of housing units not occupied as primary residences is between 36% and 53% while realizing that information is not definitive (see Figure 7).

Figure 7



Source: Created by author from U.S. Census data.

Applying the 2000 census tract 115 occupancy ratio of 64% to the 1996 GPU total of 1214 housing units results in a total of 770 occupied housing units in the Planning Area. This, if approximately correct, would suggest 235 occupied housing units within the planning area but not within census tract 115. Assuming 2.08 persons per occupied unit, as provided in the 2000 census, this would suggest that approximately 533 additional persons reside in the planning area over the 1214 listed in census tract 115, for an estimated total planning area population of 1747 persons.

According to the Monterey County Registrar of Voters, as of March 2004 there were 784 registered voters in the several precincts that comprise Big Sur as defined in this study. Using voter registration as an indicator of primary residence, these data are generally consistent with the U.S. census estimate of occupied housing units, median age, and household demographics, though once again precincts do not directly correspond with census tracts, zip codes, or planning areas, nor do they by themselves provide insight into the numbers of units existing but not being used as primary residences. Taken in conjunction with information from the Monterey County Assessor's office however, these data, too, generally support the conclusions illustrated above.

The fact that a list of names of everyone listed as a property owner in the planning area or registered to vote in any of the greater Big Sur precincts totaled 1570 seems reasonably consistent as well, given that one owner may own several parcels, there are many land owners with mailing addresses outside the area, and a significant number of parcels owned by trusts, groups of persons, or organizations.

Testing these assumptions further, as previously stated the average household size in tract 115 according to the 2000 U.S. Census was 2.08 persons per household.[16] Using the census occupation rate, County estimates for housing corrected by the conservative 53% factor representing housing not currently occupied as a primary residence would give a total resident population for census tract 115 of at least 1338 persons in 2004, only slightly fewer than the U.S. census estimate for that year and generally consistent with the population trends explained earlier.

Median prices for single family residences might illuminate housing trends further. However, information about properties sold in the planning area are again not separated, but are reported by the Monterey County Association of Realtors in aggregate with all coastal properties south of Carmel. This record shows that the 2005 median price of a single family home was $2,400,000 (average $2,639,438), increased from median $627,500 (average $1,064,967) in 1999. These increases are reported to be relatively consistent with trends reported for housing prices in other desirable coastal areas of California.[17]

Figure 8

Sea Meadows at Rocky Point
Source: K. Ekelund 2006

There was an average of 29 home sales per year from 1999 through 2005. If this approximately correct and relatively constant, approximately 290 homes would have been sold by realtors during the past 10 years. Since under current market conditions a family with an income of $60,000 is only likely to be able to afford a home costing $268,500, most of these homes have been sold for prices unaffordable to current residents according to median annual income data.

Overall then, data seem to confirm that the actual numbers of housing units available and occupied as primary residences in the planning area have increased very slightly since 1976 and probably currently number between 550 and 700 of approximately 1300 total existing housing units. Further investigation is required in order to provide more reliable estimates of the actual rate of new units built over time and the number of currently existing housing units presently not in use as primary residences, though best estimates place this later figure somewhere between 36% and 53%. Observations suggest this percentage is increasing, though systematic comprehensive verification of such observations has not yet occurred. In addition, observers note that it remains unclear how unpermitted structures, trailers and other non-standard living conditions are reflected in these totals. This adds further uncertainty.

[16] This contrasts to the county-wide 3.1 persons per household factor used in County population predictions based on housing, and represents a significant reduction from the 2.48 persons per household calculated during the 1990 census though it is very slightly greater than the 2.04 persons per household reported in the 1980 census.
[17] Comparison data taken from the Office of Federal Housing Oversight website, http://www.ofheo.gov/index.asp

A comparison of housing prices with income data suggests that homes sold are generally unlikely to be purchased by current area residents, and the rate of sales suggests that at least 25% of existing homes have been transferred to new ownership within the past 10 years. There is no evidence of a present or expected change in this trend except as it relates to the larger economy.

Are community/civic activities lacking for people or resources?

Many Big Sur residents report a perception that community and group activities are increasingly short of people and resources, raising concerns that an ongoing vibrant community life is dwindling. While no systematic study quantifying these concerns has been done to date, some preliminary impressions are possible from information generally available.

Big Sur supports a wide and changing variety of organizations involved with many aspects of community life. Appendix 2 shows a partial listing of some of the current institutions and organizations operating in the area. Some organizations have failed over the past 30 years[18], and new groups have formed.

It is notable that there are a significant number of new organizations formed since 1990. Many of these appear to be flourishing and adding new programs. In very general terms, these organizations seem to focus primarily on cultural activities[19], environmental preservation[20] and single-event annual activities[21] rather than ongoing year-round service commitments. Many of these newer organizations maintain significant partnerships with similar organizations on the Monterey Peninsula and beyond, illustrating the increasing conscious interaction of Big Sur with areas beyond its borders.

Figure 9

2000 Big Sur Hidden Garden Tour
Source: M. Diehl 2000

Long-time participants in important civic service activities like fire fighting and emergency service report some difficulties recruiting, training and retaining volunteers willing to commit to active service over time. However, funding and expansion of other parts of their programs, for example expanding existing facilities or building new

[18] No systematic examination of organizations which have failed during this period is available at this time, though such a study would be of interest, particularly if it illuminated the reasons for failure.
[19] For example, the Big Sur Arts Initiative, providing cultural enrichment activities for residents particularly children.
[20] For example, the Garrapata Creek Watershed Council, a local group working to improve the health of their watershed.
[21] For example, the Big Sur International Marathon, an annual event benefiting a wide variety of community charities and non-profit organizations.

facilities, seems to be well supported[22] since many organizations report ongoing projects of these kinds. Some organizations also report that they are responding to changes in the community by considering whether to change their traditional operating models to include more paid staff and less dependence on volunteers for these kinds of services, and are investigating possible ways to accomplish this, for example the requirements for forming an official community service district.

Further investigation would be helpful in determining details of organizational health throughout the range of organized community activities. However, the changes reported seem consistent with the population trend toward older residents and with an increasing number of part-time residents as discussed earlier. Further, given that an increasing number of residents speak Spanish as their native language, it seem possible language or cultural accessibility issues may deter some such individuals from participating in community activities as they are currently constituted.

Examining community organizations' health leaves a part of the overall picture missing however, because much social networking in this area occurs informally within separate dispersed neighborhoods. While such informal relationships defy easy categorization, one significant factor may be periodic isolation and the resultant interdependency within neighborhoods.

Figure 10

Highway 1 north of Soberanes
Source: K. Ekelund 1998

Because of the terrain and the limited access to Big Sur, many neighborhoods have experienced isolation when access roadways fail and residents are unable to enter or leave for extended periods of time. During these events, neighbors working together support one another and build lasting relationships that support an ongoing sense of connection.

These events occur less regularly in the northern section of the planning area and close to Highway 1, and increase in frequency towards its southern extent and with distance from the Highway. This leaves differing segments of the area connected with one another and with the area outside the study area at different times.[23] While some road closures can be expected each winter, the most recent example of a major event in which weather-related road failures disconnected the entire study area from the Monterey Peninsula occurred February 3rd 1998, when particularly heavy winter

[22] Though of course any community activist will immediately point out that the support is never enough to do everything that ought to be done.
[23] For a comprehensive study of Highway 1 road closures through 2001 see CalTrans's 2001 report on the subject available at http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/projects/bigsur/inventory_reports/history_road_closures.pdf.

storms washed out California Highway 1[24] in more than 40 locations essentially isolating the entire area for several weeks. Highway 1 was not fully repaired for nearly four months.

Figure 11

Driveway blocked at Garrapata
Source: K. Ekelund 1998

According to the 2000 US census, 43.8% of occupied housing units in census tract 115 are inhabited by persons who moved into the unit in 1995 or later. It seems reasonable then to assume that many of these people have not personally experienced significant road closures, and that therefore their relationships with their neighbors may differ from those who have. These differences, added to the demographic and economic factors discussed above, may contribute to the sense of threat to community reported by long-time residents.

Additionally, ongoing public service and infrastructure concerns may influence the perception of community connectedness. Many observers note that connections among residents are often formed and strengthened as they work together to provide services more usually provided by government in other areas. Most neighborhoods provide and maintain potable water supplies and access roads through small mutual water companies and road associations. These interactions provide opportunities to build ongoing relationships.

These networks depend not only on members' financial contributions but also on the physical presence of full-time year-round residents to address problems. Problems often arise disproportionately in the winter months during severe weather, a period less likely to host seasonal residents. Thus resident associations may be one area where the changing housing profile toward homes not used as a primary residence and toward older residents is having a particularly noticeable effect on the sense of community.

Figure 12

Privately maintained access road and water system at South 40
Source: K. Ekelund 2006

[24] The single north-south artery traversing the study area.

In summary, a general survey of community activities appears to reflect changes consistent with the population and demographic changes outlined earlier, suggesting that community activities are changing to better reflect the changing priorities of current residents rather than disappearing. Existing community efforts appear to be well supported overall, though more frequently through funding than through active personal participation. Provision of community and civic services may require revising current operating models to reflect the demographic changes.

Is the local economy healthy & sustainable?

The main economic engine in Big Sur is hospitality, serving the area's estimated 3 million yearly visitors. This represents a significant increase from the 1.4 million visitors per year estimated by the CCC in 1975 and exceeds that study's prediction of an increase to 2.8 million annual visitors between 1977 and 1997[25]. Restaurants, inns, hotels, campgrounds, art galleries and small supporting businesses catering to visitors' needs and interests provide a majority of business and employment opportunities. Food and lodging providers are either concessionaires on public property or private business entities, and are concentrated in existing developed areas along Highway 1. Other economic activities conducted in the area include real estate and development related consulting, construction, government and public service, cattle ranching, community subscription agriculture, scientific investigation, and creative endeavors like art, music, writing, and producing hand-made items like jewelry, sculpture, and woodwork. Some residents commute outside of the area to work and/or telecommute from home. No reliable numerical data concerning the economics of these activities are available; however anecdotal indications are that working from home is increasing among residents.

With few exceptions, strict development limits contained in the LCP mean that opportunities to develop new businesses are limited[26]. Some existing businesses have been allowed to expand, however regulations make these expansions difficult. Even remodeling or repairing existing facilities is reportedly challenging, though several examples of commercial-scale renovation, improvement and expansion have taken place since 1995.[27]

While limitations to business renovation or expansion are doubtless operationally challenging, development restrictions limiting the size of individual businesses and the overall number of businesses mean that existing businesses are protected to some extent from new direct competition. Regulations limit any individual business to no more than 30 contiguous visitor serving lodging units on any single property, and further significantly restrict the allowable number of units on any particular site depending on its

[25] CCC. (1977) *Big Sur Coast: A Sub-Regional Analysis*. p. 12. Additionally, this study concluded that 2.8 million visitors per year (doubling the current number in 1977) were more than could be accommodated even with the prospective/intended public lands purchases contemplated at that time. In particular the study referenced Highway 1 capacity at peak hours and park capacity.

[26] One example is Treebones, a resort offering accommodations in yurts or campsites that opened in 2004. Treebones is located near the southern end of the planning area.

[27] For example, the Esalen Institute General Development Plan, Post Ranch Inn expansion and renovations, and Ventana Inn expansion and renovations.

size, zoning and geographic characteristics. In addition, the overall number of units in the area is limited: no more than 300 additional units will be allowed, and these will be required to conform to a myriad of other restrictions[28]. This limitation to the supply of commercial facilities, given an increasing consumer demand as demonstrated by the rising number of visitors, can reasonably be expected to support increasing prices at existing establishments at least during peak use periods when customers are often turned away because facilities are fully used.

Highway 1 capacity is one of the governing conditions used to calculate the maximum allowable development for all uses within the study area, including commercial uses. Existing restrictions[29] prevent significant road capacity improvements from being implemented in Big Sur, and the roadway was reaching capacity during peak usage periods as far back as the 1977 CCC staff report. This trend was confirmed in the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) 1990 Big Sur Transportation Management Study and the 2003 Coast Highway Management Plan. This factor, too, is relevant in understanding the challenges facing businesses as well as individuals when operating in Big Sur. Since development is primarily allowed only in areas already developed, existing concentrations of highway use may provide yet another limit restricting the ability of new businesses to start or established businesses to grow. However, existing highway use can reasonably be expected to continue to adequately support existing visitor serving businesses.

Figure 13

Spring Sunday at the River Inn
Source: K. Ekelund 2006

The overall importance of Highway 1 cannot be overstated. Road closures severely impact the area's economy as well as its residents[30], and business revenues remain seasonal with a peak period during July and October. This challenges business health and sustainability and leads to the employment of a significant number of seasonal workers. Even voluntary road closures, for example to allow the Big Sur Marathon, are the subject of intense interest to the business community because of the significant effects

[28] Big Sur LCP, p. 85-86
[29] Highway 1 in Big Sur, previously designated as a National Scenic Byway, was federally designated an All American Road in 1996. According the CalTrans, this designation is reserved for roads which are tourist destinations in themselves. Combined with other protections, this designation further ensures Highway 1 will remain a 2-lane rural road for the foreseeable future.
[30] JRP Consulting Services provides information on the history and effects of road closures, including anecdotal reports of a wide range of economic impacts, in a November 2001 report prepared for the California Department of Transportation's Coast Highway Management Plan process, titled *a History of Road Closures Along Route 1, Big Sur.* Online at http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/projects/bigsur/inventory_reports/history_road_closures.pdf

any closure will have on both their revenues as the flow of visitors is restricted and on the ability of their employees and suppliers to reach their places of business.

Several local businesses provide some amount of housing for employees, by providing some amount of on-site employee housing and/or by renting or subsidizing rentals in offsite locations. New or expanded businesses are required to address employee housing under provisions of the CIP.[31] While it is clear that housing need for employees is greater than housing availability and that the availability of housing for workers is a factor influencing the economic well-being of local businesses, no publicly available comprehensive examination of these needs has been undertaken to date. Such an examination would be useful.

Figure 14

2003 Big Sur Marathon – Garrapata Beach
Source: K. Ekelund

No systematic examination of the overall health of area businesses has been undertaken to this point so far as can be ascertained. Publicly available TOT[32] records indicate that revenues generated by lodging are rising over the past several years, however in the absence of concrete and specific data regarding occupancy rates it is difficult to determine whether this is due to rising prices per accommodation or rising use. Other areas of concern for employers and business owners include maintaining an adequate number of customers during the off-season and the continued availability of a reliable workforce.

In spite of limited information, the overall number of businesses has not decreased and TOT revenues have increased. This suggests that businesses are at a minimum experiencing fairly stable economic health and allows for the possibility that they may be growing, though current and historical data with respect to year-round lodging occupancy rates, restaurant meals served, numbers of employees, revenues, and profits would provide better foundation for any firm conclusions if these were available. Additional study in these areas would be helpful, though of course some of these details are proprietary and business owners may not wish to share them.

[31] Big Sur Coastal Implementation Plan (1988) Section 20.145.140.B.1.m. This section requires that a report of employees and housing be submitted but does not actually require that any specific amount of housing be created.

[32] Transient Occupancy Tax, a tax collected on sleeping accommodations. TOT applies to transient stays up to 30 days and short residential rentals stays of 7 to 30 days (Short Term Residential Rentals of less than 7 days are not permitted). TOT records in area aggregate are maintained by the Monterey County Tax Collector and can be viewed by appointment at their offices in Salinas.

What trends can be documented about land use and ownership?

As with other areas discussed here, historical land use and ownership data are difficult to obtain which makes it necessary to consider estimates and approximations until such time as a primary record search is done. In this light, the 1986 Big Sur LCP states that,

> *"…approximately 1/2 of the Big Sur coastal zone is in public ownership under the U.S. Forest Service, the State Department of Parks and Recreation, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard and the University of California. If public acquisitions now contemplated or in progress are completed, approximately 60% of the coast will be publicly owned. Some of the private lands have scenic easements or deed restrictions, which limit the level of development."*[33]

Comparing these estimates to the 2005 data shown in Table 1 shows that public land ownership has increased from around 114.1 square miles (1/2 of total) in 1985 to 162.4 square miles in 2005, an increase of approximately 48.3 square miles. This means the 2005 percentage of land in public ownership is 71.2%. This is 5.2% greater than the 66% (2/3) projected in the LCP. These statistics suggest that if ownership transition were to continue at this rate complete public ownership of the area would occur in approximately 2032. A map showing land ownership as of December 2005 according to the Monterey County Assessor's files is included as Appendix 2.

Table 1

Big Sur Land ownership data per Monterey County Assessor as of 12/05			
Ownership Category	***Acres***	***Square Miles***	***% of total***
Government*	103,938	162.4	71.2%
Non profit**	3,955	6.2	2.7%
Private	38,095	59.5	26.1%
Total Big Sur LCP	145,988	228.1	100%
**Government category includes land registered to federal, state, or county government entities, schools, and Monterey County Regional Parks District.*			
***Non-profit category includes lands owned by the Big Sur Land Trust, the Soviet-American Exchange Center, Big Sur Grange, White Rock Gun Club, churches, fire brigades, the Esalen Institute, and the Rio Piedras Association.*			

Source: author generated from publicly available assessors' GIS parcel database 12/06/05

However, development potential, land value, and resident population are not directly equivalent to land area ownership, nor is it likely that the rates of either public acquisition or development will remain constant. Land is transferred by parcels, and development potential is tied to parcels. It therefore seems reasonable to consider statistics relating to parcel ownership as part of evaluating the severity of the perceived threat of public acquisition of private lands to the existence of a continued viable human community in Big Sur.

[33] Big Sur LCP (1986) p.72

One of the foundation principles of the 1986 LCP was to codify total development potential within the Planning Area and restrict it not to exceed a calculated maximum build-out level[34]. This is accomplished by zoning regulations strictly limiting the ability of parcels to be subdivided to create additional new parcels. In this context, few remaining parcels are eligible for subdivision to create additional parcels, many existing parcels are extremely limited in their ability to expand development, and some existing parcels are not legally developable at all, usually either because of imposed development constraints[35], because they cannot provide required infrastructure[36], or because their owners have legally surrendered some portion of their development rights[37].

According to the CCC 1977 study there were 1208 residentially zoned parcels within the coastal area prior to the adoption of the LUP and associated zoning. Further data concerning existing and potential parcels were collected in the October 1999 Monterey County Existing Conditions report,[38] which indicates that at that time there were 95 additional potential lots that could be created within the existing regulatory framework, for a total of at 1303 potential residential parcels and an overall total of 1440 possible parcels. According the Monterey County Assessor's GIS data files there were 1468 lots within the Planning Area as of December, 2005.[39]

The LCP specifically limited the creation of new lots within the Planning Area to a total of 100. According to the County Existing Conditions report (1999), 5 additional lots were created between 1977and 1986 and none since that time. This contrasts with the period from 1972-1977, during which 100 new lots were created for an average of 20 new lots per year[40].

As illustrated in Table 2, December, 2005 Monterey County Assessor's GIS[41] data showed that 1196 parcels, or 81.5% of the 1468 total parcels in the Planning Area, were in private ownership. This reflects the historical patterns of development in the area, where the greatest number of housing units are generally found near the coast in

[34]Build-out was intended and calculated to provide the maximum amount of allowable development of all kinds that would not threaten preservation efforts for natural amenities, unduly limit public access and recreation uses, or exceed infrastructure capacities beyond an acceptable level negotiated during the LCP adoption process. Land use regulations were then adopted to codify the calculated maximum acceptable build-out.

[35] A significant example of these constraints is the prohibition of development on lands visible from Highway 1 and other designated public viewing areas.

[36] Water supply, wastewater treatment and roads are the most common limiting factors.

[37] Increasing numbers of properties are covered in some part by recorded conservation or agricultural easements.

[38] Created as part of the Monterey County General Plan Update process, October1999. Full text available at http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/gpu/reports/Existing%20Conditions/Web%20Page%20Conditions%20Report.pdf

[39] Uncertainty concerning the area analyzed in the CCC 1977 report means that no conclusions can be made about why the current number of parcels exceeds the maximum potential number given in that report. This discrepancy may be because of differences in geographic area, differences in analysis methodology, differences in the number of recorded parcels based on subsequent recording of previously unrecorded historical lot splits, or some other unknown reason or reasons.

[40] Rate of parcel creation 1972-1977 from CCC 1977 report.

[41] Geographic Information Systems

relatively densely developed areas while the greatest amount of public land is located in very large generally undeveloped parcels, often inland.

Table 2

Big Sur Parcel Ownership data per Monterey County Assessor as of 12/05		
Ownership Category	***# Existing Parcels***	***% of total***
Government*	233	15.9%
Non profit**	39	2.7%
Private	1196	81.5%
Total Big Sur LCP	1468	100.0%
**Government category includes land registered to federal, state, or county government entities, schools, and Monterey County Regional Parks District.*		
***Non-profit category includes lands owned by the Big Sur Land Trust, the Soviet-American Exchange Center, Big Sur Grange, White Rock Gun Club, churches, fire brigades, the Esalen Institute, and the Rio Piedras Association.*		

Source: author generated from publicly available assessors' GIS parcel database 12/06/05

Land ownership transfer patterns by parcel can be expected to show a continued rise in the number of parcels in public ownership over time, though at a much slower rate than examination of the transfer of ownership by area statistics would suggest. Each piece of property acquired is made up of at least one parcel, while some very large areas are made up of very few parcels. Some parcels acquired by public agencies meet the legal requirements that would allow parcel subdivision to be considered. Since public owners are unlikely to subdivide, these potential parcels are then unavailable for future development, and would therefore reduce the total potential for additional residential development.

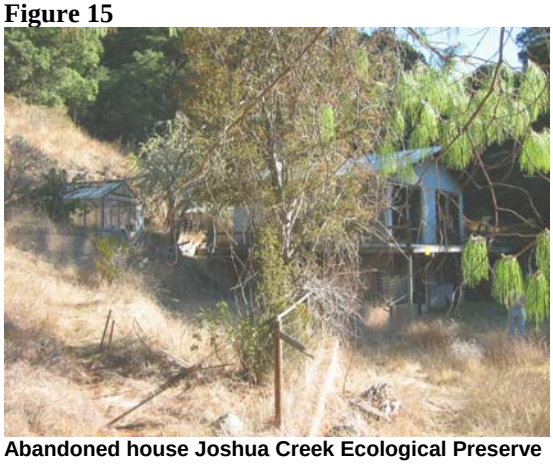
No conclusive historical information regarding the total numbers of parcels in each ownership category was found during this study, and a search of primary records to determine such a baseline for comparison would be useful. If the 1208 residentially zoned parcels in the CCC 1977 report were privately owned and comprised the totality of privately owned parcels[42], at least 12 parcels were lost from private ownership between 1977 and 2007.

It is important to note that the rate of land acquisition of public agencies by parcels is less than the discrepancy between the number of parcels expected to constitute maximum build-out in the 1977 CCC study and the number currently reported as existing by the Assessor. And, though a complete analysis is not yet available, current information suggests that while public lands generally are not made available for use in new residential development even if they are legally eligible for such use, few existing residences have actually been included in past public acquisitions. Where existing housing units have been included in public acquisitions, some have been used to house public sector workers, some have been abandoned, and some remain occupied by previous residents.

[42] Unlikely because commercially zoned parcels are also often privately owned. However, this should represent a minimum figure.

Land ownership also affects community interests because it has tax implications. Typically, taxes collected on lands provide revenues to support needed public services. Public landowners[43] and some non-profit landowners are exempt from property taxes, while some forms of recorded easements result in reduced tax assessments. Some persons interested in land ownership patterns cite these as reasons for concern.

Figure 15



Abandoned house Joshua Creek Ecological Preserve
Source: K. Ekelund 2005

In Monterey County, as in most of California, about 15% of property taxes collected are allocated to the County General Fund while the rest is sent to the State for redistribution.[44] Tax moneys from Big Sur properties are not set aside for use in providing services to Big Sur: these revenues contribute to county-wide needs.

These relationships are indirect, so even though it is clear that overall tax revenues to government from Big Sur are reduced when any lands are removed from taxable status, further research is needed to determine the amount and extent of these impacts. It is possible they are offset significantly by sales tax and TOT revenues, public spending on public lands management and services, or increased property tax revenues resulting from increased home sales prices and subsequent reassessments.

In summary, the amount of land currently in public ownership appears to be slightly greater than that envisioned by the LCP at build-out. Available data are somewhat inconclusive with respect to the existing number of parcels realistically available for new or additional development and available subdivision opportunities, though one source[45] sets the overall residential build-out potential - including subdivision, additional units allowable on existing parcels, and development constraints - at 1500 units, 285 more than the 1215 that report counts as existing presently.

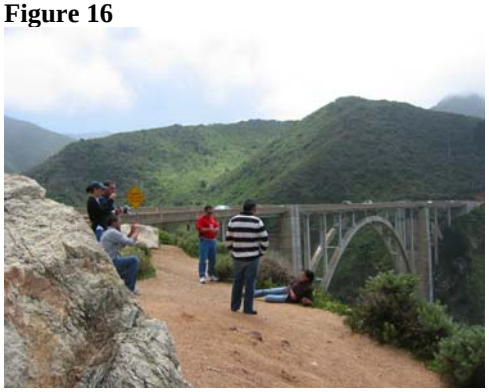
Data do not suggest that land ownership or transfer patterns are significantly affecting housing opportunities for residents directly, beyond the effects common in coastal areas generally. In all cases restrictive regulations increase the cost of development and any restrictions to the supply of land available for development creates upward pressure on land and housing prices, which can be expected to favor ownership and development by those able to afford it. More study is needed to evaluate direct and

[43] In some cases, public landowners agree to make payments to local jurisdictions supporting public services they use but do not provide themselves. These payments are called subvention payments. It is unclear whether such agreements were made and, if made whether they were honored, in Big Sur. This would be a useful area to investigate further.
[44] The remainder of property tax revenue is disbursed by the state for a variety of state-wide programs, primarily education. See Appendix 3 for more information
[45] Monterey County Existing Conditions Report (1999) p. III-I 61

indirect economic impacts of land ownership on Big Sur specifically, particularly with respect to taxes and other revenues.

How are aesthetic and recreational concerns being met?

Figure 16



Visitors below Bixby Bridge overlook
Source: K. Ekelund 2006

A major concern expressed by most persons and organizations familiar with Big Sur is that the incomparable natural beauty of the area be preserved over time. This long-standing priority has been recorded in legislation and official planning documents at all levels of government as well as in an uncountable number of non-governmental instruments, for at least the last century. The LCP reflects these priorities, and many of the developmental restrictions imposed by the LCP exist to ensure this protection. Indeed, the LCP clearly states the importance of aesthetic considerations in a statement attributed to the Citizen's Advisory Committee that helped develop the Plan, and described as articulating "the basic goal" of the LCP as being:

> *"… To preserve for posterity the incomparable beauty of the country, its landforms and seascapes and inspirational vistas. To this end, all development must harmonize with and be subordinate to*[46] *the wild and natural character of the land."*[47]

In addition to understandable aesthetic, spiritual and emotional desires that these vistas be preserved, part of the reason for this priority is economic. Besides serving as inspiration for residents and visitors alike, coastal scenery is a prime attraction for visitor-serving businesses both inside and outside the area, and is advertised as an attraction by such businesses all over the world. While a significant amount of work has been done in quantification of both market and non-market economic values for coastal aesthetic resources in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Coastal Economics Program[48], values remain difficult to assign for Big Sur specifically. However there remains little doubt that such values would be significant, regardless of the metric employed.

This examination however reaffirms the need to provide strong policy guidance which balances the public desire to enjoy Big Sur with the need to protect the area from visitor impacts that might degrade the setting's visual attractiveness. Existing policies promote public efforts to ensure permanent protection for the visible landscape. In order

[46] Although a strong case could be made favoring views including Highway 1 bridges, which seem among the most photographed landscapes in the world.
[47] From the Big Sur LCP, p.9. Online at:
http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/pbi/docs/Plans/Big_Sur_LUP_complete.PDF
[48] http://noep.csumb.edu/

to accomplish this goal, all landowners' development options are severely limited. In exchange for these limitations, owners of many important scenic vistas have been partially compensated by monetary payments for ceding development rights in easements while retaining ownership of the land itself.[49]

A major method of preserving these vistas over time has been by encouraging and enabling outright purchase of critical landscapes by public agencies. Outright public ownership provides some protections from potential residential or agricultural development, and most such agencies have mandates to provide some level of resource protection as well as beneficial uses. In most cases however, public lands agencies have a strong mandate to provide public access to preserved lands for active recreational purposes, for example hiking and camping. Thus there remains an inherent conflict between these organizations' mandates for physical access and the LCP priorities protecting visual resources and sensitive natural environments as the top priority. Development necessary to facilitate safe and convenient physical access for the public can impinge on aesthetic values as well as damage fragile natural systems.

Figure 17

LPNF Willow Creek recreational facilities
Source: M. Diehl 2005

The LCP addresses these issues directly, stating in the overview of the Public Access section:

> *"The public's right to shoreline access is ensured by the State Constitution and provisions of the California Coastal Act. In the past, the County and other public agencies have sought to provide access, where suitable, along the Big Sur coast. The visual experience has been the most traditional and most dominant form of access along the coast. Therefore,* ***preservation of visual resources is an overriding goal in planning for Big Sur.****"*[50]

It is notable however that these statements are somewhat subjective. Over time, some agencies have chosen to provide arrangements for physical access that do not conform to the goal of protecting visual resources. In addition, the number of visitors to the area continues to rise, as referenced above, adding additional pressures to provide physical access and recreation opportunities. Allowing public agencies to develop physical improvements to accommodate these needs, for example allowing parking, restrooms or developing trails within the critical viewshed, would differ from development restrictions

[49] Some important vistas remain in private ownership facing development restrictions that severely limit use without such compensation: individuals and organizations concerned with viewshed preservation cite identifying compensatory funding and making it available to these landowners as an important priority.
[50] Big Sur LCP, p.101, emphasis added

applied to private land managers in comparable situations. This is contrary to the LCP's provision that all entities, public or private, be subject to the same restrictions.

This particular conflict therefore constitutes a significant point of local friction with respect to the perceptions of fairness that allowed the LCP to be adopted with local support in the original instance, even beyond concerns for the cumulative protection of visual and recreational resources impacted by such development. In particular, the tendency for lands acquired by public agencies to be reclassified upon purchase into zoning categories that change land use restrictions from the standard imposed on private owners of the same property without significant holistic environmental review is troubling, as this practice changes the negotiated balance of land uses outlined in the LCP generally without appropriate attention to maintaining the overall intent of that legislation. This is particularly true for lands acquired in excess of those contemplated for acquisition at the time the LCP was adopted.

Even given all these restrictions and policy conflicts, visitors are being accommodated in Big Sur in numbers at least as great (estimate 3.0 million/yr) as those projected in the CCC 1977 study (2.8 million/yr), and greater than the number cited there as potentially capable of being accommodated given Highway 1 limitations (1.9 million/yr) in that study. As noted earlier, most visitor serving facilities operate at peak capacity during much of the summer, and visitors are frequently turned away. However, also as noted above, a significant number of visitors simply drive through the area to enjoy the view, making use estimates difficult. And of course, as discussed earlier, significant additional visitor serving capacity remains available[51] and unused during much of the winter season.

Recreation advocates cite the need for additional visitor overnight accommodations, particularly less expensive options. As private facilities' prices are generally increasing to serve market demand, less expensive accommodations have usually been provided on public lands as campsites or cabins, though recreational uses of many sorts including camping are potentially allowable on some of the private land in the area according to regulations. Policy restrictions as outlined above discourage new or expanded uses whether public or private, and market conditions with respect to limited supply are likely to continue to create upward pressures on prices for existing or new market-rate lodging of all sorts. The supply of affordable campsites and cabins is therefore likely to remain mainly in publicly owned facilities, like the State Parks and the National Forest. A general overview of such opportunities suggests that the existing supply remains generally constant, though various park projects in progress propose to relocate some specific sites. Significant new hiking opportunities have been created since 1977 however, and projects currently being considered propose to further increase them.

In summary, while once again it is difficult to count accurately, it is certain that Big Sur serves at least 3 million visitors each year. This is more than the number anticipated during the creation of the LCP. The main visitor use is visual enjoyment of the area's scenic vistas, usually accessed by driving on Highway 1, and this use is

[51] As long as the road is open anyway.

carefully protected under current regulations though conflicts about how these regulations are administered with respect to public properties remain troublesome. Other visitor uses, for example camping and hiking, remain available at constant or increased levels. All available recreational facilities are essentially used to capacity during peak periods particularly during the summer months, and frequently people wishing to use them must be turned away because facilities are full at those times. However unused visitor serving capacity still exists during off-peak periods. Overall, managing visitors and providing the amenities they require while avoiding conflicts with existing uses[52] and protecting the viewshed continues to be a significant challenge for the area.

What is known about biodiversity and the health of natural systems?

In addition to preserving natural aesthetic and recreational values, many people remain concerned with the sustainable health of the Big Sur's natural environment. This area provides a particularly challenging ground for policy discussions, because in spite of many years of research and investigation factual data about how various natural systems work are scarce and not widely distributed, and what data do exist are often not universally accepted as reliable or accurate.

As noted by in a Public Broadcasting Service learning module provided for high school teachers, it is generally agreed that:

> *"…different major ecosystems - ocean, shore, forest, and mountain - come together in a relatively small area in Big Sur. It is an area greatly influenced by its location on the globe. It receives currents and weather coming from Alaska and the North Pacific. With these come its particular climate and oceanic life. Upwellings of cold water from ocean canyons bring nutrients that support a major food chain. The fact that a region with such biodiversity is also prone to earthquakes is not a coincidence. Its location on the Pacific "rim of fire" and the fault lines running through it caused upheavals of the earth's crust, creating its varied landscape and habitats."* [53]

Within these larger eco-systems, an unusually wide variety of smaller and quite distinct habitat areas have developed where sometimes unique species of plants and animals co-exist naturally. Big Sur's rugged terrain and resulting sparse human settlement has combined to preserve many such areas. This has allowed Big Sur to become internationally recognized as a 'biodiversity hotspot,' bringing increased interest in environmental preservation of these areas. Some of them, for example the Landis-Hill Big Creek Reserve operated by the University of California and located in the southern part of the study area, have been and continue to be intensively studied. In addition, local voluntary collaborative efforts like the Garrapata Watershed Council are beginning to provide information useful for informing land management decisions within that watershed. Most areas however currently lack such systematic information gathering.

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[52] For example visitor parking that degrades visual landscapes, visitors who trespass on private property, vistors who litter, and visitors careless about the use of fire.

[53] http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/lesson_plans/bigsur2.html

As the overall amount of human settlement has increased with time and technology, some areas and systems are threatened. In some cases these threats are not obvious. As stated by Henson & Usner (1993).

> *"Big Sur may look wild and natural, but the area has undergone some significant changes as a result of human activities. The landscape has been altered by ranching, logging, road building and maintenance, home and commercial development, farming, deliberate burning as well as fire suppression, mining, and the introduction of non-native plants and animals. The passage of time has a healing effect and seems to smooth over many of these changes – the logged forest grows back, as does the burned field. But it is important to recognize patterns of disturbance, to understand why an area looks like it does and to better understand the short- and long-term consequences of such activities.*[54]"

Strategies for preservation of natural systems are a significant challenge to public policy. Because there are so many different habitats and systems within a relatively small area, appropriate management activities must be flexible in order to address the differing challenges provided by each particular system. This makes clear policy requirements difficult to create. This is further complicated by the lack of comprehensive and authoritative scientific recommendations for how to go about effectively protecting these specific resources. Adding to these challenges, a number of people do not agree that such systems exist as separate and distinct entities; that such environmental systems are important to preserve; that such preservation requires active stewardship; or, even if they do agree that different systems exist and preservation is important, what management techniques are likely to be successful in accomplishing it.

Figure 18

Federally endangered **Smith's Blue Butterfly** *(Euphilotes enoptes smithi)* on Coast Buckwheat plant *(Erigonum parvifolum)*
Source: M. Diehl 2004

The LCP addresses biodiversity issues by mapping critical habitats and requiring development to preserve specified species of plants and animals. In addition, the LCP incorporates plans for managing the Big Sur and Little Sur Rivers. However, much of the policy language in these documents centers on the need for data collection and establishing baseline conditions. For a variety of reasons, these requirements remain unfulfilled, leaving policy implementation uneven at best and inappropriate at worst.

There are other areas as well where regulations seem to conflict with respect to managing land to protect natural systems and support human uses. Fire prevention and

[54] Henson P. & Usner, D. (1993) . *The natural history of Big Sur*. University of California Press. Berkeley. Pg.278

control activities and requirements are a good example. Fire clearance requirements for utility lines, residences and other structures on steep slopes in forests or in chaparral increase the impacts of development significantly, fragmenting habitats, introducing non-native organisms, and frequently contributing to the potential for runoff and soil erosion. Additionally, fire access standards for roads and driveways add large areas of natural habitat disturbance to the footprint of any proposed new development, which may result in refusal of permits to develop at all. However, uncontrolled fires create obvious significant environmental disturbance as well as the potential for losses of life and property, and preparation can help minimize these impacts. Reconciling these important priorities remains an ongoing policy challenge.

In the meantime though, these and other such policy requirements with conflicting important goals all remain in effect, and create notable policy implementation problems. Unfortunately, individuals experiencing policy implementation difficulties because of these conflicts often end up dismissing the importance of the underlying concerns because the implementation is so clearly flawed and compliance with all aspects of the requirements when taken together is so obviously impossible.

As in most of California, the management of water resources to support both human and natural system needs continues to be a determinate factor in the development of Big Sur. As described earlier, developable land is generally located near areas of existing development. Some of these areas have experienced local water shortages during periods of low availability even without additional development. Further, emerging state and federal regulations regarding preservation of water flows in designated rivers and streams to benefit threatened or endangered plants and animals add additional considerations to the allocation of this increasingly scarce resource. [55] These considerations add to the network of reasons preventing lands designated as potentially buildable in the LCP from being developed in actuality.

Individuals and organizations concerned about natural resource and ecosystem preservation have taken actions to provide the kinds of protections they believe are essential. In many cases they have done this by purchasing of property either outright or partially, through conservation easements. In part this reflects concerns that political winds might change and the current LCP restrictions on development might be weakened, while ownership or permanent easement agreements would continue to provide protections indefinitely once in place. Since property purchases are expensive though, it remains common for properties acquired with the intention of biological resource protection to end up owned by public entities with significant recreation and public access mandates. Once again, it is important to note the inherent conflicts between and among theses priorities.

[55] Significant reports on this issue are contained in the Big Sur and Little Sur River Protected Waterway Management Plans and the 1977 CCC Subregional Analysis. These documents include listings of studies related to water availability, particularly within the Big Sur River, Sycamore Canyon and Palo Colorado watersheds, as does the CCC 2003 staff report on the Periodic Review of the Monterey Local Coastal Program (full text available at http://www.coastal.ca.gov/recap/mco-lcp-review.html)

The purchase of easements for conservation purposes from landowners, whether for habitat or viewshed protection or for other specific purposes, provides a method of land protection that appears to address some aspects of this conflict. Easements, once recorded on the property's deeds, provide protections without introducing pressures to provide public access, and payment for easements can help landowners afford to implement good stewardship practices. However, significant practical problems with easement management need to be addressed. There are increasing reports of property sales in which the new owner is unaware of existing easements and so unknowingly fails to comply with their terms[56]. Specifically, all easements need to be systematically recorded and tracked and comprehensively mapped so that their provisions can be enforced over time and their cumulative effects monitored.

Areas under conservation easements, like all lands, continue to require management particularly with respect to invasive species control, erosion issues, and fire preparedness. Since active land management to protect biological systems is challenging and expensive - and faces a daunting array of regulatory requirements - biological conservation-minded individuals and organizations often have difficulty funding the necessary ongoing stewardship efforts. In particular, biologists increasingly identify the single greatest threat to Big Sur's natural systems' long term health and biodiversity as the increasing predominance and uncontrolled spreading of invasive non-native organisms, many of which kill or replace native species[57]. No category of land managers are completely and successfully addressing this issue, and no comprehensive management strategy for effective response on a landscape scale has yet been established. Justly or not, many observers particularly single out public land managers and criticize them for their stewardship in these regards.

Figure 19

Invasive Cape Ivy (*Delairea odorata)* along Joshua Creek
Source: K. Ekelund

The Garrapata Creek Watershed Council (GCWC) provides an example of another strategy for habitat protection and restoration that does not require land ownership adjustments. The GCWC is a voluntary association promoting collaborative land management. Interested landowners and managers in a specific area, in this example a watershed, join together to study an area of common interest and then either modify their individual stewardship practices or engage in individual or joint restoration and habitat preservation activities based on what they learn.

[56] Of course, the terms are still binding whether or not the new owner was aware of them. However, actions taken may be irreversible, penalties can be expensive, and the sense of ending up on the wrong side of the law without knowing one was doing wrong adds to the significant antagonism between land owners and managers and regulators.
[57] Personal communications: Norman (2006), Neddeff (2005).

Figure 20

GCWC Creek Cleanup May 2004
Source: GCWC website, www.garrapatacreek.org
Used by permission.

GCWC, founded in 2000, is preparing a detailed assessment of the health of the watershed focused on stream conditions for threatened steelhead trout. Preliminary research indicated that sediment from roads was a major concern. In response, and in addition to other ongoing efforts, GCWC has begun work on an ambitious erosion control project including numerous private and public landowners and nearly 70% of the land in the watershed, with the goal of significantly reducing sediment delivery to Garrapata Creek and its tributaries while simultaneously increasing road durability and reducing maintenance requirements.

In general then, the health of Big Sur's natural systems requires attention. More baseline data needs to be collected, and there is a significant need to establish commonly accepted information among all parties engaged in land management about natural systems and effective management methods to support them. The ongoing concern about water management to support natural systems as well as human uses remains present since the establishment of the LCP, exacerbated by the listing of new species like native steelhead trout, red-legged frogs, and Smith's blue butterfly as federally threatened or endangered. Concerns about the effects of invasive non-native species have surfaced as a major threat to the local environment. Easements may provide methods to address multiple concerns, but need to be better monitored and mapped, and their provisions should be systematically communicated to new property owners. Existing conflicting regulations with respect to managing different facets of natural system protection need to be reconciled.

Specific and accepted practical methods for achieving and maintaining a healthy environment that includes both native species and allowable human uses need to be negotiated and codified based on good scientific data, a commitment to a balanced outcome including human uses as allowed in the LCP, practical local experience, and cost and benefits of implementation.

Figure 21

Steelhead trout *(Oncorhynchus mykiss)* and sculpin *(Cottus spp.)* during DF&G fish count, Garrapata Creek 2005
Source: K. Ekelund

Summary: what is known at this point?

Concerns about overall numerical population loss in Big Sur generally appear to be unfounded, though the population is aging and average family size decreasing. Concerns about housing availability appear to have merit, particularly with respect to increasing costs, increasing numbers of homes not being occupied as primary residences, and the availability of housing for people who presently live and work in Big Sur. Concerns about the health of community and civic activities may most closely reflect changing area demographics and difficulties assimilating newcomers into existing social arrangements rather than population decline, while the health of the local economy requires further investigation particularly with respect to workforce concerns.

Concerns about the effects of changing land use and ownership patterns are complex and their impacts can be indirect, making conclusive statements difficult. In general it appears that land ownership changes have had little direct effect on existing housing or population, except as mentioned above. Increased ownership of vacant lands by individuals or organizations not intending to develop them for residences has reduced the potential for additional housing and population growth to below the maximum build-out the area could potentially support as projected in the LCP. However the existing development which supported vibrant community life in past times remains physically present. Land use and management continue to be areas where significant frictions arise, particularly with respect to public lands zoning changes that change the overall negotiated balance among uses envisioned in the LCP.

Figure 22

Grimes House at Palo Colorado, once located in the town of Notley's Landing
Source: K. Ekelund 2006

While efforts to preserve the unique aesthetic setting of Big Sur are generally agreed to be successful, these efforts are increasingly coming into conflict with efforts to increase physical public access and recreational use. In addition, decisions with respect to these activities may significantly impact the health of the area's unique natural systems, which are already experiencing significant challenges because of the effects of invasive non-native organisms, natural and man-made events as fires and landslides, and water availability.

Stakeholders

Stakeholder interests are many and extremely varied. They include among others a general interest in preserving inspirational views, residents' interests in local quality of life issues, property owners' interests in property rights, property use and property value, business people's interests in maintaining a viable and sustainable businesses, and workers' interests in staying employed and in living somewhere in the general vicinity of their jobs – or if that is impossible, in having reliable transportation to and from their place of employment. In addition, stakeholder interests include visitors' interests in an overall enjoyable visiting experience that includes adequate support services, and conservation interests in preservation of natural resources and eco-systems. There is also a widespread public interest, carried in great part by public agency representatives, in allowing the greatest possible public access for recreation to the broadest possible categories of people.

Some stakeholder interests and informal or formal representation of these interests in current policy development efforts are shown in Appendix 4. Note that any individual person or organization may - and usually does - hold a variety of these interests.

Policy Alternatives

As explained previously, the current policy designed to articulate, guide and govern balanced land use in Big Sur is the Big Sur Local Coastal Plan (LCP) and its associated documents. Current land usages and community conditions reflect twenty years of experience with this policy. Options for policies to address challenges discovered over this period then can be considered in three general ways: 1) allow the LCP to remain unchanged, 2) develop updates to the LCP or 3) completely renegotiate the LCP. Since the LCP is a large and comprehensive document, it would be impossible to outline all facets of these options in this report. However general descriptions of some important areas that could be included are possible, and are described below.

Alternative #1: No change to the LCP

If it is determined that overall goals have not changed and current development regulations are adequately and effectively balancing resource protection, public enjoyment and private uses for all parties, no changes to the LCP beyond simple status updates would be required. However, this option could include changes to practices implementing the LCP.

Alternative #2: Update the LCP

If overall goals remain unchanged and it is determined that the LCP is generally providing a regulatory environment conducive to achieving them even while specific policy areas may not be doing so effectively in all cases, incremental changes to the existing LCP's goals and implementing strategies may prove the most desirable alternative.

Alternative #3: Renegotiate the LCP

If overall goals have changed significantly or if policy approaches in the current LCP have proven ineffective in achieving goals, complete renegotiation of the LCP resulting in significant policy changes may be necessary.

Evaluation criteria and assessment of outcomes

Goals

It is necessary to state goals for regulating the area's land uses, in order to determine which policy alternative is most appropriate. While total unanimity among stakeholders is of course not possible, consolidating all the available statements of goals and vision suggests that the following goals for land use seem to address stakeholders' stated interests fairly comprehensively[58]:

a) Support a stable and healthy population including residents of all ages and economic conditions.
b) Protect the critical viewshed and the area's remarkable physical beauty.
c) Provide and maintain diverse housing opportunities for residents including those who work in Big Sur.
d) Maintain adequate public services, civic opportunities and community life.
e) Provide and support adequate public recreational opportunities to allow as many people as possible to enjoy the area without degrading it.
f) Preserve, protect and nurture the area's artistic, cultural, archeological and historical resources.
g) Maintain a diverse and economically sustainable mixture of private and public land uses and ownerships to preserve and support the region's essential cultural character.
h) Protect and maintain natural resources, biodiversity and the health of natural systems.
i) Accomplish all these goals in a fair, flexible, organized, and affordable manner that encourages creativity within agreed-upon limits.

Criteria[59]

Most of these goals include subjective components. However, even considering that challenge, some information and predictions about the likely outcomes of each policy alternative in each of these areas can be made. These are included in the diagram below, with best imaginable outcomes in each area indicated by a scale from 0-5 with 5 representing optimum support for the listed goal and 0 representing minimal or no support. Alternative 2 is assumed to successfully address those issues outlined earlier where current policies fall short of their stated intent, without significantly changing the

[58] **Listed goals are not ranked in any order of priority.** See appendix 3-8 for text of various existing goal/vision statements.
[59] For non-academic readers, this table is a thesis requirement and is not in my view particularly useful in coming to any policy evaluation decision. However, it has to be included!

overall goals embodied in the current LCP. With respect to alternative 3 and to a lesser extent alternative 2, values are speculative based on an ideal outcome in all regards and would be of course dependent on negotiations. These values are shown here in italics to reflect their uncertainty. If negotiations were not successful or inclusive of all stakeholder interests, or if all goals listed were not included in the consideration, alternatives 2 and/or 3 could result in the opposite outcomes in any or all respects.

Table 3 **Goals**	**No change to LCP**	**Modify LCP**	**Renegotiate LCP**
a) Stable diverse population	4	*5*	*5*
b) Critical viewshed	4	*5*	*5*
c) Housing	2	*4*	*5*
d) Public services & community	3	*4*	*5*
e) Public recreation	5	*5*	*5*
f) History & culture	3	*4*	*5*
g) Economy & land uses	2	*4*	*5*
h) Biodiversity & natural systems	3	*4*	*5*
i) Fair, affordable & flexible rules	1	*3*	*5*
TOTAL	**27**	***38***	***45***

Analysis of tradeoffs

There are a wide variety of tradeoffs to be considered with respect to changing provisions of the Big Sur LCP. For example:

- The stated priority for preserving the viewshed limits physical public access.
- Public access can harm fragile natural resources.
- It is difficult to consistently hold public agencies to LCP standards.
- Public access can create conflicts with private property rights, for example by providing increased opportunities for trespass or by interfering with grazing activities. However, property rights include the rights of public landowners to use their property as they desire, as long as the uses are allowed under the LCP.
- Introducing visitors into previously inaccessible areas increases risks of fire and introduction of non-native invasive species. Managing fire risk and invasive species infestations may necessitate creating access to previously inaccessible areas.
- Commercial visitor-serving businesses, which employ a significant number of area residents, depend on visitors. However these businesses also require adequate levels of service (LOS) on Highway 1 for employees and supplies. Driving the

Highway is a significant visitor attraction. Highway 1 LOS and the driving experience can both be adversely impacted by concentrations of visitors.

- Expansion of business opportunities is made difficult by restrictive regulations. However, restrictive regulations protect existing businesses from increased competition.

- Public uses can degrade residents' quality of life, eroding privacy and consuming scarce water, roadway and other limiting infrastructure resources. Private uses of these resources reduce those available for public use.

- Preserving the viewshed and protecting natural habitats can interfere with otherwise allowable opportunities for development.

- Strict and expensive regulations create strong incentives for non-compliance especially among those who lack significant financial resources. Non-compliance counters the overall intent of strict regulations.

- The expense, complexity and restrictive nature of the development process provide significant barriers to creation of housing opportunities for workers. Conversely, some kinds of housing development are inappropriate to the area and would conflict with other stated priorities.

- Development restrictions, complexity and expense discourage active land stewardship, including environmental restoration activities and other desirable land management activities.

- Specific regulations are easy to administer, but lack the flexibility to accommodate individual circumstances and creativity. Flexible regulations are can be unevenly applied, creating uncertainty and confusion about what exactly is required at the least, and actual unfair outcomes at the worst.

- Difficulty in administering the extensive, complex and to some extent conflicting regulations creates significant challenges for the public service workers tasked with this work, and contributes to an ongoing environment of conflict and mistrust in individual transactions. However, public service workers are required to administer the regulations that are in effect and cannot choose to ignore or modify them in individual cases without concern for equity and potential litigation.

Barriers to implementation

First and foremost, as recognized above, is the difficulty in predicting the outcome of any re-opening of the debate that resulted in the original policy document. If the LCP were to be opened to renegotiation, it would be likely that local community activists would advocate for relaxation of some development restrictions to support

development of needed housing for working people and to ease the significant burden of complying with current regulatory restrictions, and would propose strong limitations on the acquisition of additional public lands. These proposals would be likely to be contested hotly, and additionally countered with new proposals for additional protections for natural habitats, an increase in the area considered to be critical viewshed, and an increase in public access opportunities.

The resulting policy could demonstrate a significant shift land use balance towards one end or the other of a continuum between these interests, and the outcome of this political process is difficult to predict with any degree of confidence. The only reasonable assumptions are that any particular outcome could not be assured in advance, the results might be irreversible, and the process would be extremely contentious. Policymakers at all levels recognize these concerns and express grave reservations about engaging in such renegotiations.

A significant factor in this political process is that all revisions to the Big Sur LCP must be reviewed and certified by the California Coastal Commission (CCC) after they are adopted by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors. CCC staff members, tasked with analyzing any eventual proposal for consideration by the Commission, also act as strong advocates during the negotiating process. Generally in recent experience, CCC staff promotes adoption of significant additional restrictions on private or commercial development, additional designations for natural communities requiring protection, and increasing development of public access and recreation opportunities even at the expense of viewshed or resource constraints. This recent record of advocacy, in particular in the context of individual project reviews pursuant to the CCC's statutory role as administrators of the existing LCP, creates a significant barrier for some policymakers and activists. [60]

These persons express concern that CCC staff's focus on continuing to increase public access and resource protection appears to overshadow their commitment to protecting the balance of uses articulated in the current LCP. This creates doubt that the staff would fully support any negotiated changes even if CCC staff representatives were to participate in such negotiations. If the current LCP indeed articulates a generally appropriate final balance among uses at the policy level, many feel such an equitable balance would be difficult indeed to achieve again.

These individuals might, if they did not feel the overall balance were threatened by reopening of the debate, support adjusting the LCP to better implement the existing stated goals based on current physical conditions. However under current political conditions, they are likely to oppose any changes to the existing document for fear more would be lost than would be gained.

[60] The staff recommendations referred to here and others are outlined in the Staff report on the periodic review of the Monterey Local Coastal Program dated November 26, 2003 containing revised recommendations September 2004. Full text available at www.coastal.ca.gov/recap/mco-lcp-review.html .

A further barrier to implementation of policy change is found in the experience of past implementation. This has to do with the absence of institutional memory within organizations in general and particularly within public agencies. Institutions are required to operating according to their own governing rules. Though individual representatives of most of the agencies operating in Big Sur were party to the original LCP negotiations, the agreements they entered into are not generally separately codified within the governing documents of the agencies themselves. Thus when situations occur years after the negotiations were completed, new actors within the public institutions may be unaware of these expectations or believe that these rules do not apply to their activities, especially if the rules appear to conflict in any way with the agency's normal priorities and procedures.

Lacking such institutional memory, each transaction then becomes a separate regulatory negotiation. This is not the case for private landowners who are governed by strict and relatively non-negotiable LCP regulations. The resulting perception that public agencies are not in actual practice held to the same standards as private landowners provides another barrier to implementation of policy change, since the fair and equitable distribution of the burdens required by the LCP was one of the reasons it was able to achieve acceptance originally. Overall, this means trust is further eroded.

A final barrier to implementation includes the sheer number and diversity of stakeholders and the regulatory complexity required to change any rules within this area. There are countless interests and parties, most of which are currently polarized into opposing camps because of historical mistrust. No process will succeed in including everyone who ought to be included at the beginning, so any changes proposed by any group will be likely to face repeated challenges at each of the many required levels of public review as additional stakeholders become aware of the possibilities for change. Thus any change would require a great deal of sustained energy on the part of a great many people over a long period of time. This, too, acts as a barrier to implementation of any changes.

Recommendation

As the preceding analysis outlines, the Big Sur LCP has in most cases provided good policy direction toward achieving its articulated goals. In some cases these goals have been met or exceeded. However, in some specific instances conditions have changed or implementation has resulted in an unexpected primacy of one priority over others equally important, and modifications to the LCP would better serve to preserve and promote the original negotiated balance of uses. Thus a strict analysis-based recommendation would favor alternative #2, updating the LCP, since some improvements are needed and the overall goals appear not to have changed significantly.

However, a practical analysis of the political feasibility of accomplishing an update without entering renegotiation of the original vision warns against moving forward with such an update prior to addressing the barriers to implementation discussed above. Therefore the following recommendations seem wiser.

- Continue ongoing inclusive community conversations to create common and accepted information platforms, clarify issues, and find common interests where possible. Develop collaborative specific policy recommendations based on such interests. Pursue these recommendations together wherever necessary, beginning with any recommendations that do not require modification to the LCP.

- Encourage all institutional participants in community conversations to ensure that their representatives have sufficient standing within their organizations for any suggestions they may bring forward about changing organizational practice to be seriously considered. If such suggestions are considered but not adopted, it is essential that such institutional decisions be communicated to all interested parties promptly and openly.

- Formally incorporate LCP provisions directly into the governing documentation of all institutions operating in the area by whatever means necessary, so that these agreements become a permanent part of organizational operations and culture.

- Encourage Coastal Commission staff to adopt a strict implementing role for the current LCP in all individual transactions, whether public or private, and to refrain from advocacy regarding changing the overall LCP negotiated balance of uses unless and until formal renegotiation of the regulations occurs.[61]

Conclusion

Shifting from actively working toward goals to maintaining them over time is a difficult one in American culture. It seems that we as Americans are generally better at projects than at maintenance, and the idea that a sustainable balance at current levels is a reasonable outcome is very hard for people to accept.

Big Sur adopted real growth restrictions for all aspects of its community over twenty years ago. The past two decades have offered an unusual example of what this means in practical terms. As one might expect, some results have exceeded expectations while some have fallen short.

In this example, an overall challenge to updating the LCP is that in many cases it has succeeded in accomplishing its stated goals. When the LCP was implemented, it included many actions necessary to protect the viewshed and to provide public enjoyment

[61] At some point, the Coastal Commission is required to provide the County of Monterey with a specific set of formal recommendations for ensuring the LCP remains effective in administering the provisions of the Coastal Act. (A preliminary set of these recommendations already exists as described earlier). It is to be hoped that these recommendations will be influenced by the ongoing community conversations in whatever venues these may occur, and it is further to be hoped that they will not in themselves constitute any repudiation of the overall balance of uses articulated in the current LCP. Further, it is to be hoped that the County will carefully ensure that any changes to the Monterey County General Plan will not inadvertently result in reopening the LCP to overall negotiations.

of the area. Much of that work has now been accomplished, as detailed in this study. Now it becomes necessary to shift from implementing large projects and efforts intended to establish the balance to fine-tuning existing conditions so the overall results remain sustainable when significant growth in any direction is no longer an option. Further, it is clearly important to develop durable systems for maintaining an overall balance of uses that includes all the interests considered here over the long term. And, if it is to survive over time, this system needs to be strong enough to withstand and respond to changing physical and political conditions, and to include effective methods for assimilating new stakeholders as they arrive without losing its all-important balance.

In my view, the ongoing issues outlined here in the context of Big Sur provide a preview of policy considerations the world faces more and more frequently as real resource constraints become recognized reality. How we choose to deal with this challenge can provide an example that could reach much further than this small, though very precious, area.

I believe we are up to the challenge, and look forward to the work ahead.

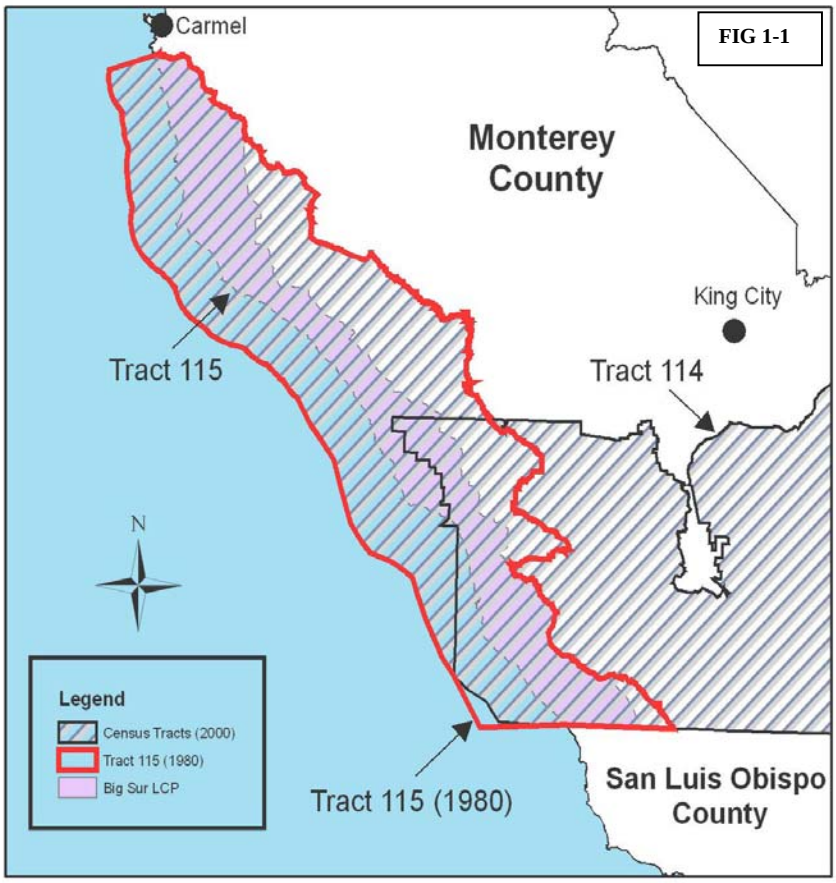
Martha Diehl
Garrapata Trout Farm
Big Sur
May 2006

Point Sur Lighthouse
Source: K. Ekelund 2006

Appendices

Appendix 1: Details of population information

U.S. census tract #115 includes a significant portion but not all of the populated area governed by the LCP. In general, it covers the area from Mal Paso Creek in the north to Esalen in the south. Census tract 114, the neighboring counting area to the south, extends south through Cambia and inland to include some Salinas Valley communities.

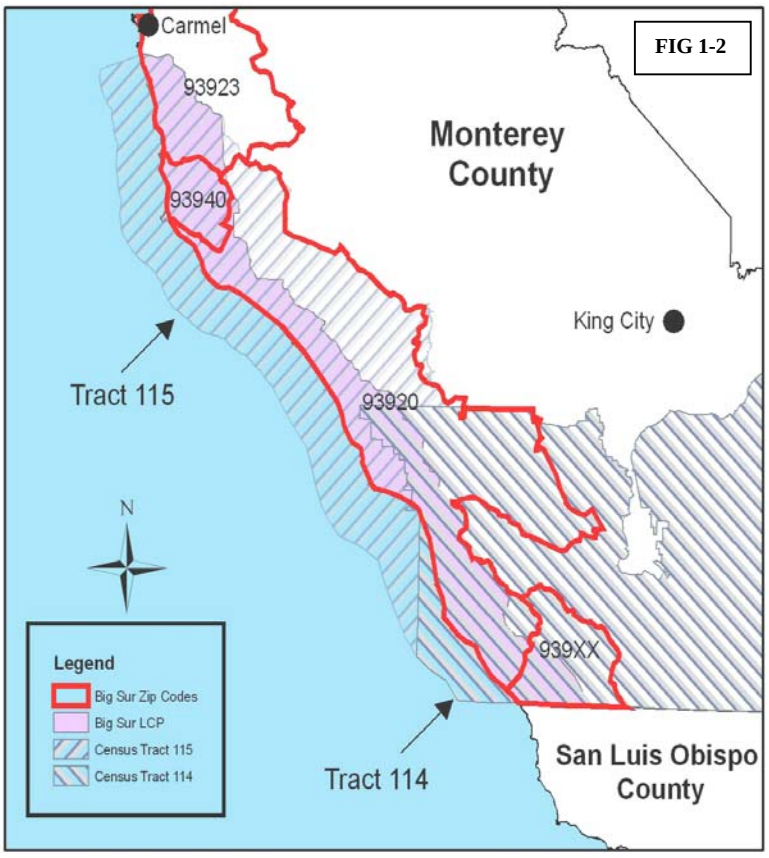


Source: map by K. Ekelund / Monterey County GIS database as of 12/06/05, U.S. Census Bureau information

An area called census tract 115 has been used since 1960, however it included a much larger area than the current tract. The size of the tract was reduced between 1960 & 1970, and again between 1970 & 1980. The 1980 boundaries (shown in red) also included areas inland of the current study area (shaded light purple in Figure 1-1). However, the area of census tract 115 has remained constant for the 1990 & 2000 census counts and is outlined in black with diagonal shading here. Note the interface with new boundaries of census tract 114.

Non-census based population estimates often do not include an attribution of sources or a description clarifying the area included. Some estimates are calculated, and neither the geographic area on which the population component is based nor the derivation of the factors used are specified. Similar discrepancies and data variations have been noted in numerous studies including the California Coastal Commission's (CCC) 1977 study, *The Big Sur Coast, A Subregional Analysis*, performed as part of the planning process that proceeded the development of the LCP. Those numbers are included in Table 1-3 along with census data and information gleaned from other population studies and estimates over time.

In recent times zip codes have become extensively used as access factors for census information as well as other public and private services. However, while the Big Sur Valley is included in zip code 93920, some of Big Sur is not because mail delivery for areas north of Hurricane Point is accomplished by contract carriers based in Monterey or Carmel, so data for these areas are included in aggregate with those communities when data is indexed to zip code. Similar difficulties arise with respect to the farthest south coast communities. These areas are shown in Figure 1-2.



Source: map by K. Ekelund / Monterey County GIS database as of 12/06/05, U.S. Census Bureau information, U.S. Postal Service information

These errors and uncertainties would be insufficient to significantly affect the population estimates for more urbanized areas but are sufficient to significantly affect estimates for the Big Sur planning area with its smaller total population.

With respect to estimates after 2000, it is important to note that the 2000 U.S. census officially projects a 4.3% increase in population per year, or approximately 55 people, despite the population reduction reported between the 1990 and 2000 counts (recorded data averages -0.9% or a loss of approx. 12.7 people per year for that period). Past estimates, including those referenced by the California Coastal Commission in 1977, have also come up with growth rates in the 4-6% range. These positive factors are used for official and unofficial projections and add significantly to the overall uncertainty.

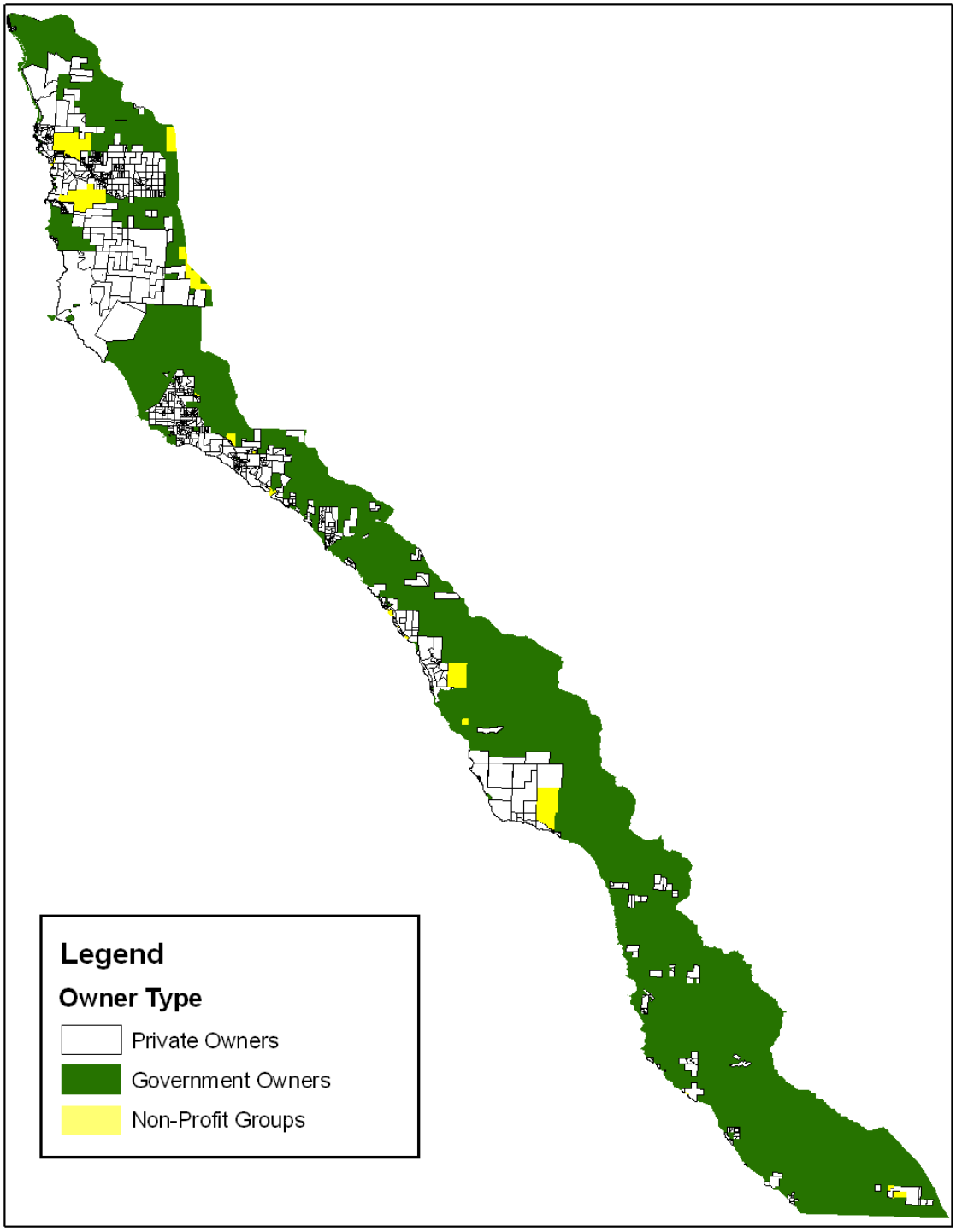
Additionally, all estimates based on housing occupation rates depend on a) the percentage of housing units in use as primary residences, and b) the additional estimate of the average number of persons per household. These calculated estimates are consistently much higher than estimates based on census counts more directly, indicating that one or both of these factors may be inaccurate.

Big Sur Population Statistics and Estimates 1880-2006		
Year(s)	***Population***	***Source/area covered/comments***
1880's & 1890's	1000-1100	Estimate for general area, source not given, supported (or at least repeated) by a wide variety of sources
1960	659	CCC 1977 staff analysis citing US census tract 115[62]
1970	898	CCC 1977 staff analysis citing US census tract 115. Note tract 115 larger than 1980 and includes significant area outside current study area.
1973	915	Monterey County Transportation Study cited in 1977 CCC report, estimated based on number of units, area not defined
1974	932	Monterey County Transportation Study cited in 1977 CCC report, estimated based on number of units, area not defined
1975	1136	Monterey County Transportation Study cited in 1977 CCC report, estimated based on housing units, area not defined
1976	1160	CCC 1977 staff analysis based on units x housing factor (2.25 people per unit) , area not defined
1976	2480	US mid-decade housing census tract 115 (calculated & estimated)
1979	1200	Local historian[63] estimate (data not attributed to source) , area not defined
1980	1271	U.S. decennial census tract 115. Note area of 1980 tract larger than current study area.
1990	1391	U.S. decennial census tract 115
1995	1500	Census tract 115 – mid-term estimate
1996	3766	Monterey County housing census (calculated) area not defined
2000	1264	2000 US decennial Census tract 115
2000	996	2000 US decennial Census zip code 93920
2000	1747	Planning Area total calculated by author from housing and occupancy rates, including South Coast estimate
2001	1400	Monterey Herald 'Living Here' 2001 – attributed to census (no further specifics available)
2003	1600	Monterey Herald 'Living Here' 2003 –attributed to census (no further specifics available)
2004	1338	Census tract 115 estimate calculated from census housing data & occupancy rate
2005	978	Monterey Herald 'Living Here' 2005 attributed to census, 93920 zip code
2006	1592	Census tract 115 US Census - projected
2006	1700	LCP area population estimate, M. Diehl

[62] California Coastal Commission staff report. *Big Sur Coast: a subregional analysis*. CCC, 1977
[63] Lussier, Tomi Kay. *Big Sur: A Complete History and Guide*. Monterey: Big Sur Publications, 1979

Appendix 2: Land ownership map
Map by K. Ekelund from Monterey County Assessor's GIS database December 6, 2005

Public and Private Ownership in Big Sur



Appendix 3: 2006 Community Organizations, Institutions and Activities

Organizations and Activities	**Current status**
Apple Pie Preschool	Preschool. Housed at Captain Cooper School. 18 children.
Big Sur Arts Initiative	Est. 1998. Arts/cultural enrichment for children & community. Sellout garden tour yearly. Programs increasing
Big Sur Chamber of Commerce	Represents business community. Operates main Big Sur information website.
Big Sur Charter School	Est. 1997. K-12, 25 students (10 not from Big Sur)
Big Sur Environmental Institute	Est. 2004. Offers educational programs related to environmental conservation, stewardship and sustainability. Expanding operations.
Big Sur Fire Brigade	3 fire stations, 48 volunteer firefighters, 3 add'l non-firefighter volunteers
Big Sur Grange	Sponsors publication of *Big Sur Roundup*, local monthly produced by volunteers. Hosts variety of community events & organizations at Grange Hall.
Big Sur Health Center	New/expanded facilities 2004
Big Sur Historical Society	Est. 1978. Membership continues approx. stable
Big Sur Jade Festival	Est. 1991, benefits South Coast Community Land Trust
Big Sur Land Trust	Est. 1978. Expanding (many programs outside Big Sur Planning Area)
Big Sur Library	Est. 1914. Add to facility 2003. 4-5% increase in number of items borrowed 2003-2005. Expansion 'consistent with other area rural libraries'
Big Sur Marathon	Est. 1986, sells out each year, Benefits local charities, record donations 2005
Big Sur River Run	Est. 1980. Benefits local charities. Fully subscribed
Big Sur Softball League	Est. 1976. League continues active. Commissioner reports many spectators however increasing challenge finding enough players to fill teams.[64]
Captain Cooper School	72 students. K-5, enrollment relatively steady
Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers	Est. 1993. Lighthouse complex restoration proceeding.
Coast Property Owners Association	Est. 1962, recent programs well attended
Esalen Institute	Est. 1962. South Coast Center added since LCP. Comprehensive Dev. Plan approved 2005, includes further facilities expansion.
Garrapata Creek Watershed Council	Est. 2000: actively engaged in significant watershed restoration projects
Gazebo School	Preschool & daycare. Est. 1977, up to 22 children. Currently 8-16 children
Henry Miller Memorial Library	Est. 1981. Flourishing. New projects & programs, fundraising for remodeling
KL Felicitas Foundation	Est. 2000. Private charitable organization. Produces/distributes *Big Sur Voice*, quarterly publication, and a wide variety of community efforts
Landels-Hill Big Creek Reserve	Est. 1977. Use data approximately stable 1998- 2003. New projects listed
MidCoast Fire Brigade	Est. 1979. New fire station under construction. Volunteer training expanding.
New Camaldoli Hermitage	Est. 1959, currently engaged in 'rebuilding' project with +/- $4.5mill budget
Pacific Valley School	22 students. K-12
Rio Piedras Association	Est. 1925. Private outdoor recreation/conservation club
South Coast Community Land Trust	Est. 1990. Yearly jade festival. Supports wide variety of community initiatives. Opened South Coast Community Center 2005.
St. Francis of the Redwoods	Operated out of the Catholic Diocese of Monterey: offers Sunday worship
US Post Office - Big Sur	*No information*
Ventana Wilderness Alliance	Est. 1998, focus: public land management for conservation, growing
Ventana Wildlife Association	Est. 1977. Focused on supporting area wildlife. New facility 1992, organization reported growing

[64] See photos on following page, used by permission and available at http://www.bigsursoftball.org/champions.html

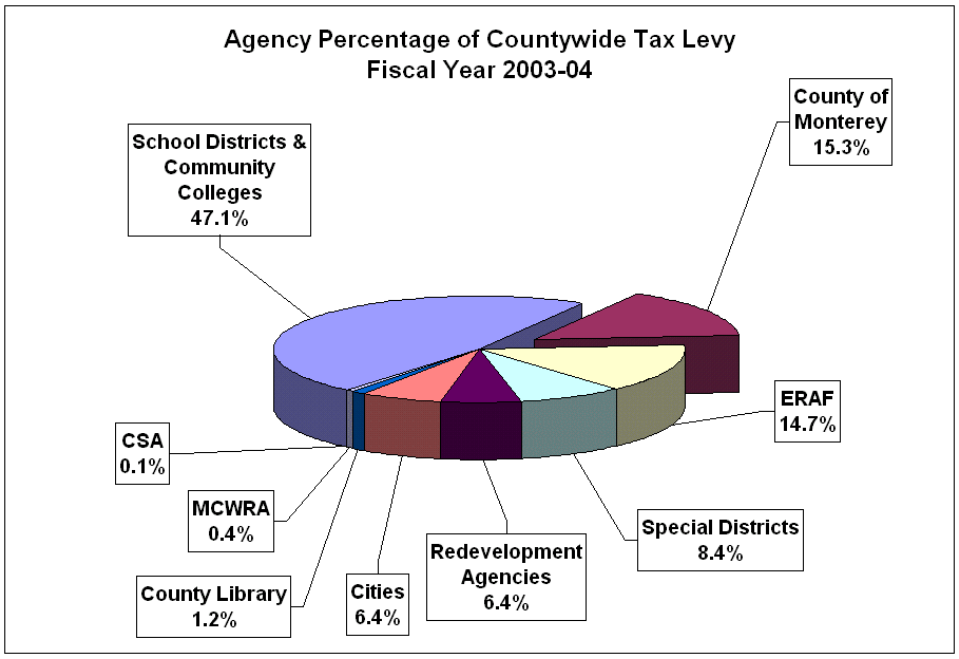
1976 Softball Champion **Outlaws**

1985 Softball Champion **Rebel Wreckers**

2005 Softball Champion **Burritos**

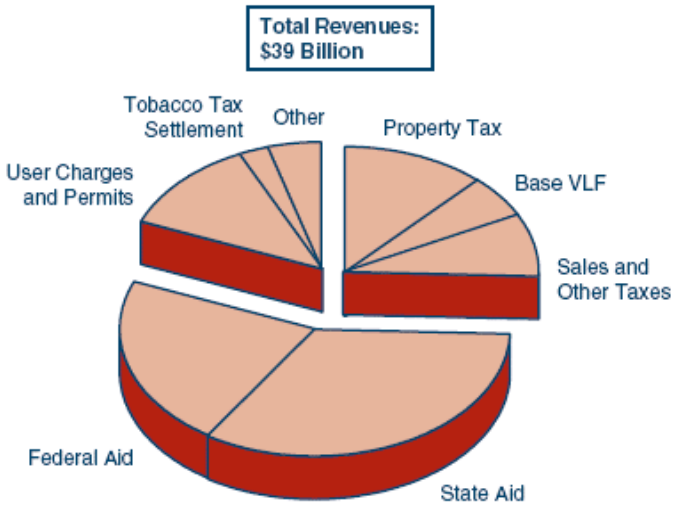
Appendix 4: Property tax in Monterey County

Where do our property taxes go?



Source: Monterey County's Tax Collector/Treasurer website
http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/taxcollector/apportion_files/countywide%20tax%20levy%202003-04.htm

An Overview of County Finance (statewide aggregate):



>About one quarter of counties' spending comes from tax revenues. These are the counties' discretionary general purpose revenue sources. State and federal aid represent the largest sources of county revenues.

>About half of county spending is on various health and social services programs. An additional 30 percent of county spending is for public protection, including police and fire services.

Source: California Legislative Analyst Elizabeth Hill's official website
http://www.lao.ca.gov/2004/cal_facts/2004_calfacts_state_local.htm

Appendix 5: Stakeholders and interests

Stakeholders and interests		
Interest group	***Interest summary***	***Interest Representatives***
Residents	Quality of life, e.g.: • Availability of civic activities & services • Sense of community • Culture • Continuity & history • Privacy and serenity • Natural environment • Safety	• Volunteer Fire Departments & Firesafe Council • Schools and supporting organizations • Big Sur Health Center • Big Sur Grange • Coast Property Owners' Association • Big Sur Arts Initiative • Big Sur & Henry Miller Libraries • Big Sur Historical Society • Resident representatives on the BSMAAC[65] • Land Use Advisory Committees (LUACs) • Other civic/service associations • Individuals representing own views
Landowners	• Property use options • Property value • Property management • Costs to owning property • Effects of external decisions on own property • Natural environment	• Coast Property Owners' Association • Resident representatives on the BSMAAC • Land Use Advisory Committees (LUACs) • Individuals representing own views
Business owners & operators	• Continued business viability • Continued attractiveness to visitors • Natural environment • Reliable transportation corridor • Sufficient and reliable workforce	• Chamber of Commerce • Individuals representing own views
Employees	• Continued employment opportunities • Reliable transportation corridor • Sufficient available housing • Remote connectivity for those working from home	• Individuals representing own views
Visitors	• Scenic value • Natural environment • Cultural assets • Accessibility • Variety of recreation opportunities • Available food and lodging • Safety	• Local and regional businesses serving visitors • Workers • Chamber of Commerce • Local, state, & federal legislators • Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District • California State Parks • US Forest Service • California Coastal Commission • Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary • Big Sur Land Trust • Trust for Public Lands • Nature Conservancy • Save the Redwoods League • Other NGO's • Individuals representing own views

[65] BSMAAC = Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council

Conservation interests	• Views/ scenic values • Health & sustainability of natural systems • Biodiversity • Natural resource management • Connectivity of natural areas	• Residents • Local, state, & federal legislators • Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District • California State Parks • US Forest Service • California Coastal Commission • Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary • Big Sur Land Trust • Trust for Public Lands • Nature Conservancy • Save the Redwoods League • Other NGO's • Individuals representing own views

Appendix 6: 1986 Big Sur LCP extracts

These extracts are taken from the introductory statements of the adopted Big Sur Local Coastal Plan. Complete text is available at
http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/pbi/docs/Plans/Big_Sur_LUP_complete.PDF

Beginning on Pg. 8:

The plan has specifically been prepared to conform to the purposes and spirit of the California Coastal Act. Its proposals are intended to resolve the difficult issues that face Big Sur's future.

The major features of the Plan are to:

- Guide all future planning decisions for County and State agencies, and set direction for the U. S. Forest Service in its planning.
- Show the kinds, locations, and intensities of land uses allowed, therefore, serving as a basis of zoning and other implementing actions.
- Present policies concerning land development and environmental protection and management
- Call for management of Highway 1 and all other governmental activities on the Coast.
- Set forth detailed review procedures for all applications based on a permit review process.
- Set forth a system for coordinating the actions of all involved government agencies.
- Provide an environmental resource management data base to support the plan and future planning decisions and provide for the periodic updating of this information.
- Identify the urgent need for financial assistance to the County in preserving Big Sur's natural resources and cultural heritage. Funds are specifically needed to protect scenic views and to provide public access.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The Big Sur Coast Citizens Advisory Committee in providing guidance to the County established the basic philosophy and goals upon which this plan is based. In its report to the County entitled, "Philosophy and Goals for Planning", the Committee stated:

> "The scenic beauty of the Big Sur Coast, and the opportunity to escape urban patterns, are prime attractions for residents and visitors alike. Man-made improvements detract from the near-wilderness attributes of the area if not

individually, then collectively.

Quality should have precedence over quantity of any permitted uses, whether residential, recreational, or commercial. Any new development should remain within the small-scale, traditional and rural values of the area, rather than to introduce new or conflicting uses.

Land use planning and management policies should be directed towards maintenance and restoration of Big Sur's remaining rural and wilderness character. Without compromising its character or depleting its resources, the area should be accessible to as many as can be accommodated.

The special cultural characteristics of the Big Sur Coast should also be recognized as a primary resource. Man's presence along this coast continues to reflect a pioneering attitude of independence and resourcefulness; the environment has been a special nurturing ground for individual and creative fulfillment. The community itself and its traditional way of life are resources that can help to protect the environment and enhance the visitor experience."

From these philosophic concerns the following basic goal was defined by the Citizens Advisory Committee:

"To preserve for posterity the incomparable beauty of the Big Sur country, its special cultural and natural resources, its landforms and seascapes and inspirational vistas. To this end, all development must harmonize with and be subordinate to the wild and natural character of the land."

The County recognizes that the comprehensive preservation ethic expressed by these statements will require special vigilance and determination by all persons, public and private, whose actions affect the future of the Coast. New and innovative planning tools are needed. Coordination among the numerous governmental agencies with a role on the coast has taken on a new urgency. The plan makes a number of recommendations requiring actions by both the County and other agencies. These recommendations must be vigorously pursued to make the plan a success.

2.2 BASIC OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

To accomplish the major goal of the plan, five basic objectives and policies are defined to guide all future public and private use of the coast.

1. Natural Resources

The overall direction for the future of the Big Sur coast is based around the theme of preserving the outstanding natural environment. The County's objective is to develop and effectively carry out a constantly improving system for managing man's use of the natural resources of the Big Sur coast for the long-term benefit of both visitors and residents.

The County's basic policy is to take a strong and active role in the stewardship and safeguarding of Big Sur's irreplaceable natural resources. Where there are conflicts, protection of these national resources is the primary objective with definite precedence over land use development.

2. Coastal Scenic Resources

Recognizing the Big Sur coast's outstanding scenic beauty and its great benefit to the people of the State and the Nation, it is the County's objective to preserve these scenic resources in perpetuity and to promote, wherever possible, the restoration of the natural beauty of visually degraded areas.

The County's basic policy is to prohibit all future public or private development visible from Highway 1 and major public viewing areas.

3. Highway 1

Highway 1 traversing the Big Sur coast is a special road of great local, state, and national significance. It was built by the public primarily for scenic travel and recreational enjoyment and over the years has been managed with this purpose always in mind. In light of the public's great need for recreational opportunities, this original objective has become even more important.

Monterey County's basic policy is to take a strong and active role in guiding future use and improvement of Highway 1 and all categories of land use related to and dependent on the highway. The County's purpose will be to maintain and enhance the highway's aesthetic beauty and to protect its primary function as a recreational route. The highway shall remain a two-lane road and provide walking and bike trails wherever feasible. In order to maintain the highway's benefit to the public as a scenic recreational travel experience, the County will pursue legislation to restrict and regulate slow moving vehicles during peak travel hours.

4. Land Use and Development

The County's primary land use planning objective is to minimize development of the Big Sur coast in order to preserve the coast as a scenic rural area where residents' individual lifestyles can flourish, traditional ranching uses can continue, and the public can come to enjoy nature and find refuge from the pace of urban life.

The County's basic policy is that future land use development on the Big Sur coast shall be extremely limited, in keeping with the larger goal of preserving the Coast as a natural scenic area. In all cases, new land uses must remain subordinate to the character and grandeur of the Big Sur coast. All proposed uses, whether public or private, must meet the same exacting environmental standards and must not degrade the Big Sur landscape.

5. Shoreline Access

The County acknowledges the increasing public demand for access to the Big Sur coast and wishes, in the spirit of the California Coastal Act, to accommodate this legitimate

desire. However, in doing so, the County recognizes an ever greater commitment to preservation of the fragile natural environment. A range of additional concerns appear as well, including the need to ensure public safety and to protect the rights of property owners. Therefore, it is the County's objective to develop an optimal plan for public access that accounts, in a balanced way, for all these considerations.

Because preservation of the land in its natural state is the highest priority, the County's basic policy is that all future access must be subordinate to this objective. Care must be taken that while providing public access, that the beauty of the coast, its tranquility, and the health of its environment, are not marred by public overuse or carelessness. Visual access should be emphasized throughout Big Sur as an appropriate response to the needs of visitors. Visual access to the shoreline should be maintained by directing future development out of the viewshed.

It is the intention of Monterey County to review both the plan policies and local development at 5-year intervals to determine what, if any, changes in the plan or its implementation may be desirable or necessary.

Appendix 7: LUAC suggested LCP revisions 2002/2003

These comments were prepared by the Big Sur and South Coast Land Use Advisory Committees as part of Monterey Count's General Plan Update (GPU) process. These comments were originally submitted to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on 9/13/02, and resubmitted 5/23/03. Complete text is available at http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/gpu/news/Big%20Sur%20LUAC%209_13_02.pdf

VISION STATEMENT

The Big Sur Coast Planning Area is approximately 234 square miles in size, with over seventy miles of coastline stretching from the Malpaso Creek in the Carmel area in the north down to the San Luis Obispo County line near San Simeon in the south. Much of this area is held in public lands, including the Los Padres National Forest, which includes the Ventana Wilderness Area, as well as state parks such as Pfeiffer-Big Sur State Park, Andrew Molera State Park, Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park and Garrapata State Park. This Planning Area includes Big Sur Valley, as well as the smaller communities of Lucia, Gorda and Pacific Valley. Tourism is the primary source of revenue in Big Sur. Several private resorts and restaurants serve visitors to the area in addition to the recreational opportunities offered on public lands. These attractions are popular destinations for tourists and serve as employment areas for residents.

A fundamental and long-standing goal for the Big Sur Coast is:
To preserve for posterity the incomparable beauty of the Big Sur country, it's special cultural and natural resources, its landforms and seascapes and inspirational vistas. To this end, all development must harmonize with and be subordinate to the wild and natural character of the land.

It is recognized that the comprehensive preservation ethic expressed by this statement requires special vigilance and determination by all persons, public and private, whose actions affect the future of the Coast. New and innovative planning tools are needed, and coordination and cooperation among governmental agencies is essential.

In support of this fundamental goal, it is recognized that:
The scenic beauty of the Big Sur Coast, and the opportunity to escape urban patterns, are prime attractions for residents and visitors alike. Sightseeing and scenic driving are the primary recreational activities. The built environment detracts from the near-wilderness attributes of the area if not individually, then collectively.

Quality should have precedence over quantity of any permitted uses, whether residential, recreational, or commercial. Any new public or private development should remain within the small-scale and rural values of the area, rather than to introduce new or conflicting uses.

Land planning and management policies should be directed towards maintenance and restoration of Big Sur's remaining rural and wilderness character. Without compromising

its character or depleting its resources, the area should be accessible to as many as can be accommodated.

The special cultural characteristics of the Big Sur Coast should also be recognized as a primary resource. People's presence along this coast continues to reflect a pioneering attitude of independence, self-sufficiency and resourcefulness; the environment has been a special nurturing ground for artistic inspiration and creative fulfillment. The community itself and its traditional way of life are resources that can help to protect the environment and enhance the visitor experience.

In order to support the continued existence of this special coastal community, we must seek to provide and protect housing to accommodate the people who live and work here, and encourage land to remain in private ownership so that traditional rural lifestyles can flourish.

CHARACTERISTICS AND BACKGROUND OF THE BIG SUR PLANNING AREA

The following characteristics identify some, though not all, of the features of the planning area, including some that are called out on various General Plan maps. These and other characteristics of the local area should be determined at a parcel level at the time of an application for new development, and are broadly described here to indicate policy topics which may need to be complied with for development approval.

The Major Land Groups in the Big Sur area are Rural Lands and Public Lands (see Map 1). While there are no Rural Centers as designated in the Major Land Groups, there are several smaller areas with concentrated existing development that have the Land Use Designation of Rural Community Center, per the 1988 certification of Monterey County's Local Coastal Program. These areas are designated in the Land Use section below, and on maps in the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan. The intent is that these existing commercial areas continue under this Plan, and that commercial uses therein be considered conforming uses under this Plan.

Development in Big Sur is limited in great part due to the steep topography, with most of the area with a slope over twenty-five percent. The main corridor of the Big Sur Planning Area is Highway 1, a National Scenic Byway. As part of the Circulation Concept Plan in the Circulation Element, the roadway will be considered a Visitor-Serving Corridor in the County roadway network. No major improvements are foreseen on the corridor within the scope of the General Plan.

A variety of threatened and endangered species such as the California Brown Pelican and the California Clapper Rail inhabit portions of the Big Sur Coast. Vegetation types in Big Sur include oak woodland, annual grasslands, redwood forest, mixed conifer, and some oak woodland. Coastal prairie can also be found at the northern end of the planning area. Significant water bodies include the Little Sur and Big Sur Rivers. High to moderate soil erosion hazards exist throughout the planning area, with small pockets of low soil erosion hazard risk. There are several existing metallic mineral mines in the southern portions of

Big Sur near Gorda, as well as an identified Mineral Resources Zone (MRZ-2) to the north that is no longer being actively extracted. Much of this area is publicly owned, including the Limekiln State Park, Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park, Pfeiffer State Park, and Andrew Molera State Park, as well as the Los Padres National Forest and Ventana Wilderness areas, and conservancy and open space areas near Lucia.

Big Sur is famous for its scenic resources, and protection of the critical viewshed is a principle factor affecting new development in this Planning Area.

Despite the steep topography, most of the Big Sur area has low susceptibility to earthquake-induced landslides, while some areas have moderate to high susceptibility. Along the lower reaches of riverbeds and flood plains, there is some history of flooding under extraordinary storm conditions. High fire hazards exist throughout most of Big Sur.

Although it has remained a rural area where pioneering families still carry on ranching, Big Sur's residents have also achieved acclaim for their cultural contributions. Many well known writers, artists, and artisans have been inspired by the coast's dramatic vistas and timeless solitude. A strong community identity continues to attract new residents and also contributes to tourism. The primary trend affecting the future of the Big Sur Special Coastal Community is public acquisition of private land in the area.

The Big Sur Planning Area consists of about 150,000 acres. Approximately 75,000 acres, or half the land in the Planning Area, are within the Los Padres National Forest and the Ventana Wilderness. The Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan, adopted in 1986, provides the following land use figures as of its date of adoption: Almost 9,000 acres contained within units of the State Park System; approximately 55,000 acres in private ownership, consisting of approximately 1100 parcels ranging from less than an acre to several thousands of acres in size, 700 of which were vacant and 370 occupied (some with multiple dwellings); and about 800 housing units of which about 600 were permanent single family dwellings.

At the present time there are about [??,???][66] acres within units of the State Park System. Since 1986 the United States Forest Service has acquired an additional [?,???] acres of land. There are now approximately [??,???] acres in private ownership. Land in private ownership consists of approximately [???] parcels. [???] of those parcels are vacant and [???] are occupied. There are presently [???] housing units of which about [???] are permanent single family dwellings. [??,???] acres of the private land in Big Sur is protected by permanent scenic or conservation easements or has otherwise relinquished development rights.

The Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan contemplated that public land ownership would comprise about 60% of the land in the Big Sur coastal zone after all acquisitions under consideration in 1986 were completed. Public land ownership now consists of about [??]% of the land in the Big Sur coastal zone.

[66] Question marks in this section are present in the original document.

Scenic Highway 1 is a major influence on the Big Sur area. Highway 1 origin and destination studies found that about 95% of peak use of the highway is by visitors and the remaining 5% is comprised of residential, commercial, and agricultural traffic. One conclusion is that because so little Highway capacity is used by residents, extraordinary restrictions on the nominal remaining residential use of land could not benefit Highway 1 levels of service significantly enough to be justified. Another conclusion is that if the level of service on Highway 1 degrades to an unacceptable level, restriction or modification of use of the highway during peak use periods may be required.

Highway 1 is nearing capacity use during peak periods. In order to maintain the quality of the visitor experience for the millions who find their way to Big Sur each year, additional visitation should not be encouraged.

The Big Sur Land Use Plan was developed during the early 1980's through an extraordinary collaboration between the Big Sur community, Monterey County and the California Coastal Commission. In order to ensure the long-term protection of the area, these parties engaged in an extensive and inclusive public process which resulted in a document that achieved broad support. The success of this effort depended upon all parties agreeing to certain underlying principles that are implicit in policies found throughout that plan.

The result was a social contract between the Big Sur community, the County, and the Coastal Commission, with the purpose of preserving for posterity the characteristics that make Big Sur a unique and special place. In order to accomplish this goal, the Big Sur area was downzoned to the point that residential development potential at buildout will be limited to levels that will not threaten the continued well-being of Big Sur or overburden public facilities such as Highway 1. In consideration for limitations on residential development potential, the County and the Coastal Commission adopted a plan that limited future visitor serving development potential to levels that would roughly maintain the then-existing proportion of residential to visitor-serving development. By means of this agreement, the future of Big Sur was secured against quantities of residential or visitor-serving development that would threaten to alter the rural, wild, and scenic quality of the area. This Plan continues this tradition, protecting Big Sur for future generations.

Another aspect of the social contract between the Big Sur community, the County, and the Coastal Commission, is that all development restrictions that apply to private landowners will apply equally to public landowners; both are regulated to protect the area. This is especially important given the large percentage of publicly owned land within the Planning Area.

Appendix 8: Big Sur Vision Project 08/26/2005

Big Sur Vision Project draft statement *(consensus items 08/26/05 in standard font + outstanding unresolved issues in italics)*

Big Sur Vision

Based on the following shared values and ideals,

a) Commitment to community renewal and vitality.
b) Open, honest and direct communications and interactions.
c) Ethical behavior.
d) Respect for ourselves and one another.
e) Cooperation through collaboration, responsibility, and accountability.
f) Upholding a diversity of views, ideas and opinions.
g) Equity among and between stakeholders at all levels of our work together.
h) Aspire to live within an equitable rule of law.
i) Honoring our history and experience.

VISION

we envision Big Sur through the year 2050 to be a community which:

1. Balances and nourishes the spirit, natural environment, culture, economy, and human community as one interdependent system.

2. Ensures the citizens of Big Sur are the primary influence in determining and directing the present and future of Big Sur.

3. Maintains a population of people of all ages and economic situations sufficient to ensure ongoing community civic activities and services.

4. Inspires its residents and visitors.

5. Provides those who work in Big Sur with the opportunity to live in Big Sur.

6. Preserves the community's long history of local stewardship.

7. Supports private property rights.

8. See discussion next page

9. Includes public agencies which support and sustain the community vision by openly managing all their activities to the same extent and standards required of private entities.

10. Is governed by land use regulations and processes which are clear, equitable, and proportionate to the task at hand.

The Vision Statement includes only those items where we reached consensus. The effect of public acquisition of private lands on the community has been identified by many community members throughout this process as vitally important to their vision of Big Sur in 2050. The group has so far not reached consensus on how to address this issue. The following approaches have been suggested:

Previous draft language:
Vision 8. Prevent any further public acquisition of private land or adjustment of public jurisdictional boundaries unless the agencies and the community agree to a comprehensive community plan outlining reasons how any such change would support this community vision.

First suggestion:
Vision 8. Changes the balance of public/private land ownership and management only when any such change supports this community Vision.*

*Since much of our discussion centers on Vision point #8, which has been a continuing area of concern for a number of community members, the following strategy and actions are suggested for immediate consideration:

> *V8 Strategy 1:*
> Prevent any further public acquisition of private land or adjustment of public jurisdictional boundaries unless the agencies and the community agree to a comprehensive community plan outlining reasons how any such change would support this community vision.
>
> > *V8 Strategy 1 action 1:*
> > Start meetings of all interested stakeholders to create such a plan as soon as possible.
> >
> > *V8 Strategy 1 action 2:*
> > Ask public agencies to suspend acquisition or boundary changes while we meet.

Second Suggestion:
Vision 8. Sustains a mix of private and public land ownership and supports openness, collaboration, and communication between private and public parties.

Third suggestion:
Vision 8. Balances the effects of public and private land ownership and management to sustain community.

Appendix 9: 2005 Big Sur Land Use Agencies' statement of vision

Strategic Planning Update from Public Lands Agencies

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, State Parks, and the USDA Forest Service support the Big Sur community's efforts towards a vision that the entire community can embrace. We support a vision of a sustainable community in Big Sur, and respect the diversity, vibrancy, and artistic and cultural heritage of the community. We also recognize the unique character of the entire Big Sur community that includes residents, visitors, public and private landowners, businesses and their employees, and many others.

We acknowledge the ongoing concerns of the residential community about public land acquisitions, and we are committed to a positive dialogue to help resolve residents' concerns. To that end, we have been meeting over the past year with community leaders and amongst ourselves to address community concerns about public land acquisition in Big Sur. We look forward to sharing our missions and visions with the community to assist in the creation of a comprehensive community plan that includes the public agencies.

The missions of the three public agencies are:

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District:

■ To acquire and maintain open space lands for public benefit and enjoyment,

■ To protect the natural character and community value of those lands in perpetuity with best management practices,

■ To provide educational and interpretive services which open minds to an appreciation and understanding of open space.

■ To encourage community involvement in the development of an open space system through joint projects and encouragement of citizen participation in the planning process.

State of California - Department of Parks and Recreation

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

United States Department of Agriculture – Forest Service

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

The collective public land acquisition goals that guide our agencies in formulating future priorities for Big Sur include the following:

- **Sustaining protected natural resource values on existing public lands.**
- **Protection of the critical viewshed.**
- **Coastal access and trail access, including the California Coastal Trail.**
- **Protection of priority watersheds and natural resource lands.**
- **Expanding public recreational opportunities**.
- **Preservation and protection of archeological, historical, and cultural resources.**

We welcome the opportunity to be involved in the community vision process. We are committed to a collaborative outcome that responds to residents' concerns and fosters mutual respect and understanding. Through continued and regular constructive dialog, our desire is for a more meaningful and ongoing mutual relationship that results in a vision plan that is sustainable and meets the needs of the entire community.

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