The voice of our community

MONTECITO ASSOCIATION

Permitting amendments comparison

Coastal Montecito | Updated October 30, 2026

Coastal recommendations pass through the CPC. The Board of Supervisors makes the final ordinance decision.

CPC approved recommendations 4–0 on October 28. Ordinance changes await BOS action. “Exempt” applies only to the review named.

Issue	Existing ordinance	Proposed staff changes	MA requests	MPC recommendation October 19, 2026	CPC recommendation October 28, 2026
Residential size, bulk, scale and height	Guidelines and applicable code standards guide review. Not all are interchangeable with binding floor-area limits.	Staff’s streamlining proposal did not incorporate MA’s requested lot-based floor-area schedules.	Codify lot-based residence/accessory floor-area standards and hillside protections. Accompanying proposal: 25 feet/two stories, with MBAR compatibility findings for exceptions up to 35 feet.	No explicit adoption identified in supplied recommendation summary.	MA’s lot-based floor-area and height standards were not added. Staff confirmed the countywide 0.35 FAR design-review trigger does not apply to Montecito.
Architectural review for homes	New and remodeled homes generally require MBAR review, subject to existing exemptions.	Exempt new or remodeled single-story dwellings up to 2,500 sq. ft.	Limit exemption to 2,000 sq. ft. aggregate, 14 feet high, and one story. Preserve historic-resource exceptions.	Reject the proposed exemption. Retain architectural review for new and remodeled dwellings.	DIFFERS FROM MPC: Recommend exempting qualifying new or remodeled single-story homes up to 2,500 sq. ft. from design review in coastal Montecito. Also ask BOS to apply the same exemption inland for consistency.
Residential planning permits Notice and appeals	CDPs generally provide notice and appeal opportunities, with location-specific Coastal rules.	Non-appealable CDP pathway for qualifying development outside Coastal appeal jurisdiction and below County environmental thresholds. Required Coastal notice remains.	Preserve meaningful notice and appeals. MA letter specifically addresses LUPs. Corresponding coastal CDP wording needs to be explicit.	Supported non-appealable planning-permit approach, relying on retained design review for notice and design-related appeals.	Support qualifying non-appealable permits, with mailed informational notice at the planning-permit stage. Notice provides access to project information, not appeal rights. Permit-exempt work is not noticed. Park joined the final 4–0 vote.
Commercial height and FAR Coastal	VERIFY CURRENT CODE: Exact requirements need checking by zone and Coastal certification status.	Separate earlier Phase 2 amendments and Coastal certification from pending Phase 3 changes.	CV height: 25 feet/two stories. CN FAR: 0.25. Interpret letter’s “reduced by 25 feet” as “reduced to 25 feet.”	No separate adoption of these numerical standards identified in supplied summary.	No separate recommendation adopting MA’s numerical commercial height or FAR standards was identified in the final motion.
Nonresidential additions Design review	Generally require architectural review, subject to existing exemptions.	Exempt a 10% allowance, with a minimum allowance of 500 sq. ft. and maximum of 5,000 sq. ft., matching existing architecture.	Cap exempt additions at 500 sq. ft.	Reduce maximum exemption to 1,000 sq. ft. Retain the 10% framework and 500-sq.-ft. minimum allowance.	Support MPC’s narrower exemption: maximum 1,000 sq. ft., retaining the 10% framework and 500-sq.-ft. minimum allowance.
Taller walls and gate posts Coastal and inland	CUP requirements apply above specified heights and in specified locations.	Move specified taller fences/walls and gate posts from CUP to LUP review.	Retain MBAR review when downshifted. Walls over 8 feet and gate posts over 10 feet: CUP plus MBAR review.	No separate modification identified in supplied recommendation summary.	Recommend staff’s permit downshift as part of the package. No separate adoption of MA’s additional wall/gate-post thresholds was identified.
Detached accessory structures Design review	Staff described an existing exemption up to 500 sq. ft., subject to location and other conditions.	Expand exemption to structures under 800 sq. ft., behind another building or on the rear half of the lot.	Maximum 500 sq. ft. and 12 feet high.	Limit exemption to under 500 sq. ft., with required location and matching architectural style, materials, and colors.	Support MPC’s under-500-sq.-ft. exemption, with location and matching-design conditions. No separate adoption of MA’s 12-foot height limit was identified.

Minor residential additions	MBAR review generally applies unless an existing exemption covers the work.	Exempt matching single-story additions up to 10% of existing area or 500 sq. ft., whichever is less.	No separate addition threshold specified in the letter. Narrow residential exemption and retained notice and appeals requested.	Accept limited exemption, but exclude additions to designated, listed, or eligible historic resources.	Support limited matching-addition exemption with broader historic protection. Amerikaner withdrew his objection to including structures of known or potential historic interest before the final vote.
Historic resources Simple review eligibility	Potential historic significance can be identified during application review, including for unlisted properties.	Eligibility criteria focus on whether a structure is designated or listed.	Protect designated resources and those determined eligible for designation. Retain appropriate review.	Broaden protection to capture eligible or known historic resources. Wording to be refined.	RETAIN BROADER PROTECTION: Support MPC's historic-resource recommendation, including known or potential historic interest. Amerikaner withdrew his objection. Final code wording is to be prepared by staff for BOS.
Pools and pool equipment Planning permits	Pools require a CDP. Standalone pools are already generally exempt from design review.	Exempt qualifying pools and equipment from planning permits. Building and other applicable permits remain.	MA public comments supported retaining planning permits.	Retain planning permits for pools and pool equipment.	Support MPC's recommendation to retain planning permits for pools and pool equipment in coastal Montecito.
CV commercial development Permit threshold	Development Plans required for all structures, alongside applicable coastal permits.	Under 5,000 sq. ft.: simpler permit. 5,000–under 10,000: intermediate permit. 10,000 or more: Development Plan. Applicable CDPs remain required.	Preserve appropriate commercial oversight and enforceable standards. No alternative Development Plan threshold specified in MA letter.	Allow CDP without Development Plan for cumulative development up to 2,500 sq. ft. Retain Development Plans above 2,500 sq. ft.	Support MPC's coastal threshold: cumulative development up to 2,500 sq. ft. may proceed with a CDP without a Development Plan; above 2,500 sq. ft. retain a Development Plan.