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SC Local Coastal Program To Get Full Airing Thursday

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The city of Santa Cruz Local Coastal Program will get a full airing Thursday by the Planning Commission during a 7:30 p.m. meeting in the City Hall council chambers.

But the fact is that many details of the LCP have been given considerable airing over the past several years as a Planning Department team headed by Senior Planner Steve Russell brought city planning into conformance not only with the state Coastal Conservation Act but with revision of the city General Plan.

For example:

The city recently adopted the general plan to guide its future growth and change. The city also has adopted a housing element for the general plan that focuses on the increasingly complex housing issue.

Both documents establish housing policies as a basis. They point the city toward using its resources for the preservation and construction of housing for the full range of income groups either living or hoping to live in the city.

Like the Coastal Act that mandated the creation of the city's LCP, these documents make no distinction between areas inside or outside the coastal zone.*

"Santa Cruz as a whole is a coastal city," the LCP states, "with housing costs, mix of housing types, housing problems and housing opportunities that are, in general, similar throughout. Any distinction with regard to housing would be meaningless."

The LCP simply enunciates on housing that which has been enunciated before in other city documents, that housing here will be for all, definitely for persons of low and moderate income, that housing that meets all the needs will be protected, encouraged and/or provided.

The city housing rehabilitation programs, the encouragement through Measure 0 for creation of low-cost housing units and even the provision of low-cost housing through subsidization of one form or another, have all been discussed before and will be discussed again Thursday.

The city Planning Department, Russell has said, decided that "what is good enough for the coastal zone is good enough for the rest of the city," and the Santa Cruz City Council has concurred in this through decisions involving

housing programs.

The LCP states that the existing housing stock in the city represents about 75 percent of the housing units that will serve Santa Cruz into the year 2000. The Measure 0 program will limit construction of new units to about 3,500 to the year 1990.

Safeguarding the present 18,000 dwelling units is a must, the LCP asserts. Providing affordable housing to low and income people is another must, with the city using inclusionary zoning, federal housing assistance and rental rehabilitation as the most direct ways to implement the Coastal Act housing policy, the city general plan policy and the city housing element policy.

Where is the housing to go up, as those 3,500 new units are built?

The LCP breaks out locations for new housing along Western Drive and the Beach Area. Guidelines for land use on the city's west side call for conversion of some agricultural land to urban uses, including residential and industrial development. Other dwelling units would go in at Neary's Lagoon, Frederick Street, Bay Street and West Cliff Drive.

Coastal access, another requirement of the Coastal Act, is an important consideration of the city's LCP because the city has about 4.6 miles of coastline running from just west of Natural Bridges State Beach to the eastern side of the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor.

There are 15 primary coastal access points in this 4.6 mile strip, each providing direct access to the water and/or beaches. The entire length of the coastline also provides visual access to the Pacific Ocean and Monterey Bay.

Not generally realized is that Santa Cruz is a unique coastal city in that public rights of way (roads) essentially run the length of the coastline, thus providing access to the Pacific Ocean or Monterey Bay along the entire city coastline.

"Privately held parcels are generally on the inland side of the public right-of-way, or there are public rights-of-way perpendicular to the coastline which provide access for the public."

The LCP spells out that there shall be no development that will interfere with the public's right of access to the sea.

The city also has a previously discussed policy that prohibits de-

velopment on the seaward side of the coastal roads in the city.

On another key point in the Coastal Act, the city through other policies and actions has preserved open space "to meet recreational, social, economic and environmental needs." A city bikeway system is in development, many parks have been built on are being built, safe pedestrian pathways to the water have been constructed, and so have staircases.

But the LCP is only as good as the means for carrying it out, Russell has several times stressed.

The proposed LCP therefore details an implementation program that covers many facets and insures a busy Planning Department over the next few years.

For instance, to implement the city general plan there will have to be new zoning regulations for general plan map designations, a design review ordinance, and preparation of review procedures for public projects in the coastal zone.

To implement the coastal housing strategy there will have to be an inclusionary ordinance, a condominium conversion ordinance and a mobile home ordinance.

To protect natural resources there will be needed a revision of conservation regulations to protect riparian and other areas, a tree ordinance, a grading and excavation ordinance, an ordinance requiring open space easements of land dedication in certain areas, an erosion control ordinance.

An ordinance will be needed to identify and protect critical archeological resource areas.

Special plans will have to be developed for different city areas and coastal sites.

In other words, the LCP to be reviewed Thursday marks "the end of the beginning" of bringing the city fully into conformance with the Coastal Act.

An enormous document, it is sure to please some and vex others as it deals with land uses in relationship to the coast.

But the Coastal Act requires the LCP.

And the LCP stands ready now for review.