

Scenic and Visual Resources Policy Comparison Table

Scenic and Visual Resources Policies

LUP Update – 2018 Public Draft	Origin
<i>General Policies</i>	
<u>9-1. Scenic Resource Prioritization.</u> New development in highly scenic areas shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.	New 2018 Planning Commission Public Draft Policy
<u>9-2. Visual Quality.</u> Preserve and enhance the unique visual quality that contributes to Half Moon Bay’s coastal and small-town character, including its open, expansive views from the coastal terrace to the beaches, bluffs, ocean, picturesque landscapes, and foothills.	2016 First Public Draft Policy
<u>9-3. Scenic Resources.</u> Ensure the long-term enjoyment of publicly accessible scenic view corridors, viewsheds, vista points, and unique or characteristic visual resources.	2016 First Public Draft Policy
<u>9-4. Visual Compatibility of New Development.</u> Require all new development to be sited and designed to ensure visual compatibility with the character of surrounding areas.	2016 First Public Draft Policy
<u>9-5. Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Scenic Resources.</u> Ensure that scenic and visual resources are able to adapt to the impacts of sea level rise and are not negatively affected by adaptation strategies employed to protect development from sea level rise.	2016 First Public Draft Policy, Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment
<i>Scenic and Visual Resource Identification Policies</i>	
<u>9-6. Highly Scenic Coastal Areas.</u> Designate the beach and ocean, coastline, foothills, ESHA, open spaces, and other largely undeveloped areas as highly scenic coastal areas.	2016 First Public Draft Policy
<u>9-7. Viewing Areas and Vista Points.</u> Designate public places including the California Coastal Trail, other trails, beaches, parks, other areas with public access that offer broad views of highly scenic coastal areas as public viewing areas and vista points.	2016 First Public Draft Policy

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<p><u>9-8. Scenic View Corridors.</u> Designate spans of Highway 1, Highway 92 and other public roads that offer broad views of highly scenic coastal areas as scenic view corridors.</p>	<p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-13:</u> The City will establish regulations to protect scenic corridors along all designated primary shoreline access routes where existing permits or development does not exist.</p>
<p><u>9-9. Special Communities and Neighborhoods.</u> Identify Heritage Downtown as a special community and protect the scenic quality of this area and its surrounding historic buildings and properties as contributing visual resources.</p>	<p>New 2018 Planning Commission Public Draft Policy</p>
<p><i>Natural Resource Policies</i></p>	
<p><u>9-10. Alteration of Landforms.</u> Require that all new development be sited and designed to minimize alteration of natural landforms through the following measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conform to the natural topography of the site; b. Minimize substantial grading or reconfiguration of the project site; c. Prohibit flat building pads on slopes and requiring building pads on sloping sites to utilize split-level or stepped-pad designs; d. Require that man-made contours mimic the natural contours of the site; e. Ensure that graded slopes blend with the existing terrain of the site and surrounding area; f. Minimize grading permitted outside of the building footprint; g. Cluster structures to minimize site disturbance and development area; h. Avoid landscaping that blocks public ocean views; i. Minimize the height and length of cut and fill slopes; j. Minimize the height and length of retaining walls; and k. Allow the balancing of cut and fill operations on site only where the grading does not substantially alter the existing topography, where it blends with the surrounding area when viewed from public locations, and where it conforms to all applicable LCP policies for hazard avoidance and habitat protection. Export of cut material may be required to preserve natural topography. 	<p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-10:</u> New development on upland slopes visible from Highway 1 and Highway 92 as indicated on the Visual Resources Overlay Map, shall not involve grading or building siting which results in a significant modification of the hillscape; where trees must be removed for building purposes, reforestation shall be provided as a part of any new development to maintain the forested appearance of the hillside. Structures shall be subordinate in appearance to the natural landform, shall be designed to follow the natural contours of the landscape, and shall be sited so as not to intrude into the skyline as seen from public viewing places.</p>

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<p><u>9-11. Bluff Setback.</u> Require development near blufftops to incorporate a setback from the edge of the bluff that avoids visual impacts from scenic public areas including trails and lookouts on the blufftops, and from the beach and ocean below. The blufftop setback necessary to protect visual resources may be in excess of the setback necessary to ensure that risk from geologic hazards are minimized for the life of the structure, as detailed in the Coastal Hazards chapter of the LUP.</p>	<p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-2:</u> Blufftop structures shall be set-back from the bluff edge sufficiently far to ensure that the structure does not infringe on views from the beach and along the blufftop parallel to the bluff edge except in areas where existing structures on both sides of the proposed structure already impact public views from the beach or along the blufftop. In such case, new structures shall be located no closer to the bluff edge than adjacent structures.</p>
<p><u>9-12. Bluff Dedication.</u> Require Planned Developments on the west side of Highway 1 to dedicate, or preserve as open space, the coastal bluff face and an area inland from the edge of the bluff adequate to minimize visual impacts while also providing safe public access, avoiding hazards, and accommodating bluff erosion.</p>	<p>2016 First Public Draft Policy</p>
<p><u>9-13. Dark Night Skies.</u> Protect dark night skies as part of Half Moon Bay’s scenic and visual character by preventing light pollution from development. Avoid impacts from exterior lighting on the city’s visual character and sensitive habitats.</p>	<p>2016 First Public Draft Policy</p>
<p><u>9-14. Lighting.</u> Protect scenic natural resources including dark night skies and ESHA by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Limiting exterior lighting to low-intensity fixtures, shielded, and concealed so that the light source is not directly visible from public viewing areas, with the exception of traffic lights, navigational lights, and other similar safety lighting; b. Limiting installation and use of high-intensity perimeter lighting and lighting for sports courts or other private recreational facilities in scenic areas; and c. Reducing light pollution from greenhouses as a condition of approval for new development through shielding and other practices that minimize light spillover. 	<p>2016 First Public Draft Policy</p>
<p><i>Coastal Access Policies</i></p>	
<p><u>9-15. Highway Viewsheds.</u> Ensure that viewsheds from Highways 1 and 92 are preserved and enhanced. Coordinate with Caltrans to ensure that future improvements and changes to the highways, including</p>	<p>2016 First Public Draft Policy</p>

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implementation of the Town Boulevard concept, will preserve or enhance the visual experience of traveling through a coastal community with small town character.	
<p><u>9-16. California Coastal Trail Viewsheds.</u> Ensure that views of the ocean, bluffs, hillsides, and ridgelines from the California Coastal Trail are protected, particularly in areas adjacent to Planned Developments including Surf/Dunes Beach, Venice Beach, West of Railroad, and North Wavecrest. Provide sufficient setbacks and height limits for any development permitted near the trail to avoid impacts to visual resource. Ensure visual resource protection is maintained in any sea level rise adaptation strategies for the trail, including planned retreat.</p>	<p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-6:</u> Parking facilities and recreational structures, including campers, located in public regional recreational areas, private recreational areas, visitor-serving commercial areas and other developments shall be designated to minimize visibility from the beach.</p>
<p><u>9-17. Scenic Corridor Study.</u> Study the scenic corridors of Highway 1 and 92 as part of the Town Boulevard approach to assess the viewshed from the perspective of existing and potential development along these corridors. Identify scenic segments along Highway 1 and 92, including views of the ridgelines and other visual resources. From the study, establish standards to address, at a minimum, appropriate building heights and setbacks, longest wall lines, minimum space between buildings, and streetscape design.</p>	<p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-1:</u> The City will establish regulations to protect the scenic corridor of Highway 1, including setbacks for new development, screening of commercial parking, and landscaping in new developments. The City will establish and map scenic corridors for Highway 1 to guide application of the policies of this chapter. Minimum standards shall include all areas within 200 yards of State Highway 1 which are visible from the road.</p>
<p><u>9-18. Gateways Enhancement.</u> Enhance the eight gateways along Highway 92 and Highway 1 identified on Figure 9-1 to improve community identity and provide wayfinding.</p>	2016 First Public Draft Policy
<p><u>9-19. Roadway Design.</u> Work with Caltrans and private developers to ensure that proposed new roads or modifications to existing roads which traverse scenic areas minimize visual impacts to views from scenic routes.</p>	2016 First Public Draft Policy
<p><u>9-20. Vehicle, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Viewing Points.</u> Maintain and improve existing turnouts, parking areas, lookouts, and beach and park access areas that provide scenic viewpoints.</p>	2016 First Public Draft Policy
<i>Picturesque Landscape Policies</i>	
<p><u>9-21. Streetscapes.</u> Streetscape improvements, whether they are required as a condition of new development or implemented as a City project, shall be designed and maintained with street trees, vegetation,</p>	2016 First Public Draft Policy

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and landscaping to enhance the visual experience of the corridor without obstructing scenic views upon maturity.	
<u>9-22. Town Forest.</u> Plan for long term maintenance and diversification of a resilient town forest by preparing a preemptive tree replacement plan for significant stands of trees.	2017 Planning Commission Public Draft Policy
<u>9-23. Vegetation Removal.</u> Require that new development be sited and designed to minimize removal of natural vegetation, including the preservation of existing on-site native trees and plants. Encourage removal of non-native invasive species to maintain visual and biological quality.	<u>Original LUP Policy 7-9:</u> New development shall be sited and designed so as to avoid or minimize destruction or significant alteration of significant existing plant communities identified in the General Plan (which include riparian vegetation along stream banks, and notable tree stands).
<u>9-24. Fuel Modification and Visual Resources.</u> Recommend that new development on sites requiring fuel modification incorporate alternative fuel modification measures (e.g. exterior sprinklers, fire resistant building materials, and fire-resistant construction methods) in order to minimize impacts to visual resources due to site disturbance, removal, and thinning of natural vegetation.	2016 First Public Draft Policy
<i>Built Environment Policies</i>	
<u>9-25. Land Divisions.</u> Require land divisions, including lot line adjustments, to be designed in a manner that minimizes impacts to visual resources. Measures for minimizing visual impacts include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clustering the building sites to minimize site disturbance and maximize open space; b. Prohibiting land divisions and adjustments that would create lots with insufficient space for development, including to avoid the need for fuel modification, without impacting visual resources; c. Requiring new land divisions to provide sufficient park and open space areas; d. Prohibiting building sites on ridgelines within City limits; e. Minimizing the length and impermeability of access roads and driveways; f. Using shared driveways to access development on adjacent lots, where feasible; g. Reducing the maximum allowable density in steeply sloping and visually sensitive areas; and	2016 First Public Draft Policy

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<p>h. Incorporating interim seeding of graded building pad areas, if any, with native plants unless construction of approved structures commences within 30 days of the completion of grading.</p>	
<p><u>9-26. Site Planning and Design for New Development.</u> Require new development to be sited and designed to minimize adverse impacts on scenic areas visible from public roadways, public trails and accessways, or other public viewing areas and to be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding area. Measures to reduce visual impacts include, but are not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Siting development in the least visible portion of the site; b. Breaking up the mass of new structures; c. Designing structures to blend into the surrounding natural landscape; d. Restricting building maximum size and height; e. Clustering development; and f. Incorporating landscape elements, and screening. 	<p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-11:</u> New development along primary access routes from Highway 1 to the beach, as designated on the Land Use Plan Map, shall be designed and sited so as to maintain and enhance the scenic quality of such routes, including building setbacks, maintenance of low height of structures, and landscaping which establishes a scenic gateway and corridor.</p> <p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-12:</u> In areas affording broad views of the ocean from Highway 1 as indicated on the Visual Resources Overlay Map, all new development shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission to ensure conformance with the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Structures shall be sited and designed to preserve unobstructed broad views of the ocean and shall be clustered to the maximum extent feasible. (b) A landscaping plan shall be included in the development plans for approval and shall provide for landscaping which, when mature, will not impede public views of the ocean. (c) Building height shall not exceed one story or 15 feet, unless an increase in height would not obstruct public views to the ocean from the Highway or would facilitate clustering of development so as to result in greater view protection.

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<p><u>9-27. Design Review.</u> Utilize design review to ensure that proposed developments do not interfere with or degrade the visual features of the site or adjacent sites which contribute to its visual character as viewed from public viewing areas. Incorporate review criteria into design guidelines.</p>	<p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-5:</u> All new development, including additions and remodeling, shall be subject to design review and approval by the City Architectural Review Committee.</p>
<p><u>9-28. Visual Impact Evaluation.</u> Where any development is proposed within a highly scenic coastal area, view corridor, or viewshed, a visual impact evaluation shall be required and may include visual simulations and/or story poles.</p>	<p>2016 First Public Draft Policy</p>
<p><u>9-29. Hillside and Ridgelines.</u> Protect broad views of hillsides, prominent ridgelines and other intervening ridgelines that are visible from a public road, view corridor, a beach, public viewing areas and vistas points, or public hiking trails through the following means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prohibiting new development above the 160-foot contour line; b. Ensuring new development below the 160-foot contour line is sited and designed to avoid significant intrusions into the skyline through the application of appropriate height and setback restrictions; and c. Establishing standards for the Town Forest and streetscapes to highlight and frame, but not block important views. 	<p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-10:</u> New development on upland slopes visible from Highway 1 and Highway 92 as indicated on the Visual Resources Overlay Map, shall not involve grading or building siting which results in a significant modification of the hillscape; where trees must be removed for building purposes, reforestation shall be provided as a part of any new development to maintain the forested appearance of the hillside. Structures shall be subordinate in appearance to the natural landform, shall be designed to follow the natural contours of the landscape, and shall be sited so as not to intrude into the skyline as seen from public viewing places.</p>
<p><u>9-30. New Development on Hillsides.</u> On hillside building sites below the 160-foot contour line, locate building pads and new development on flatter portions of the project site as consistent with the grading restrictions and hazard avoidance policies of this LCP, except where there is an alternative location that would be more protective of scenic resources or ESHA.</p>	<p>2016 First Public Draft Policy</p>
<p><u>9-31. Planned Developments and Viewsheds.</u> Require Planned Development areas that provide viewsheds over largely undeveloped areas, towards the ocean (e.g. Surf Beach/Dunes Beach, Venice Beach, and North Wavecrest), or the hillsides (e.g. L. C. Smith Estate and Podesta), to assess visual resources and provide a visual impact evaluation with any master plan for developing the Planned Development. Planned Developments shall be planned to minimize adverse impacts on viewsheds, and shall utilize the siting and design standards of Policies 9-24 and 9-25.</p>	<p>New 2018 Planning Commission Public Draft Policy</p>

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<p><u>9-32. Heritage Downtown.</u> Ensure through implementation of land use regulations and design review that Heritage Downtown is protected as a special community and that the architecture, landscape, scale and ambience of this area is maintained.</p>	<p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-8:</u> New development, alterations to existing structures, and proposed demolitions in the downtown area, as designated on the Visual Resource Overlay Map, shall be subject to design approval in accordance with the following criteria: (a) Scale and style similar to that of the predominant older structures. (b) Continuity in building lines maintained along Main Street. (c) Existing older buildings which contribute significantly to the character of the area not demolished or altered in a manner which eliminates key architectural features.</p>
<p><u>9-33. Historic Buildings.</u> Support the maintenance and restoration of historic buildings and properties to preserve their scenic and visual qualities.</p>	<p>New 2018 Planning Commission Public Draft Policy</p>
<p><u>9-34. Historic Jail and San Mateo County Garage.</u> Maintain views of the historic Jail and San Mateo County Garage from Main Street by keeping a view corridor open between Main Street and Johnston Street immediately south of City Hall.</p>	<p>New 2018 Planning Commission Public Draft Policy</p>
<p><u>9-35. Fences, Walls, and Landscaping.</u> Ensure that fences, walls, and landscaping shall not block views of scenic areas from scenic roads, parks, beaches, and other public viewing areas through height restrictions and required landscape maintenance.</p>	<p>2016 First Public Draft Policy</p>
<p><u>9-36. Landscape Screening.</u> Prioritize avoidance of impacts to visual resources through site planning and design alternatives as the preferred method of mitigating the scenic impacts of development over landscape screening. Landscape screening as mitigation of visual impacts shall not substitute for project alternatives including re-siting or reducing the height or bulk of structures, but may be used where appropriate to soften any unavoidable visual impacts of new development. Where permitted, landscape screening shall be comprised of native and drought tolerant species and shall be maintained such that scenic views are not blocked at maturity.</p>	<p><u>Original LUP Policy 7-7:</u> Recreational vehicle parks shall be sited and landscaped within five years of development to assure full screening from public roads, vista points, public recreation areas, and residential areas.</p>

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<p><u>9-37. Lighting Standards.</u> Establish citywide lighting standards that take into account the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lighting levels appropriate for the land use; b. Minimum and maximum lighting levels for various conditions; c. Evenness of lighting levels (e.g. parking lots); d. Cut-off requirements and spillover restrictions; e. Maximum height of light fixtures; f. Lighting for signage and landscaping; g. Prohibited lighting (e.g. that will cause glare or be intrusive); and h. Allowances for differing light levels for security lighting responsive to neighborhood preferences related to safety and comfort. 	New 2018 Planning Commission Public Draft Policy
<p><u>9-38. Lighting Plan Review.</u> Require lighting plans with applications for development. For subdivisions and new commercial and multi-family residential development a photometric lighting plan is required; for single-family and other small development proposals, lighting cutsheets with photometric specifications are sufficient.</p>	2016 First Public Draft Policy
<p><u>9-39. Street Lighting.</u> Street lighting design and fixtures shall abide by the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide enough lighting to meet safety standards; b. Utilize lower light poles as feasible; c. Ensure that fixtures direct light down with no spillover beyond the roadway area they intend to illuminate; and d. Retrofit existing street lights that do not meet these standards. 	2017 Planning Commission Public Draft Policy
<p><u>9-40. Lighting Inspection.</u> Where new lighting associated with residential or commercial developments will face the public right-of-way, ESHA, or ESHA buffer areas, require design review during the construction phase to ensure compliance with the required lighting criteria.</p>	New 2018 Planning Commission Public Draft Policy
<p><u>9-41. Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Visual Resource Protection.</u> Ensure that sea level rise adaptation measures protect visual resources while minimizing hazards. Emphasize the use of adaptation strategies that will not impact visual resources, such as shorter-term retrofitting with plans for longer-term relocation or removal, and update</p>	2016 First Public Draft Policy, Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment

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design standards accordingly. Adaptation strategies such as shoreline protective devices or elevation techniques should be designed such that the development is subordinate to, and in character with, the surrounding visual resources of an area.	
<p><u>9-42. Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Height Limits.</u> Avoid modifications to height limits in scenic areas and provide for options to modify roof-lines or elevate the lowest flood elevation for flood protection in a manner that is consistent with scenic character. In some cases, it may be appropriate to update height limitations to allow for elevation in response to sea level rise and flood hazards.</p>	2016 First Public Draft Policy, Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment
<i>Signs and Utilities Policies</i>	
<p><u>9-43. Signs.</u> Ensure that signs are designed and located to minimize impacts to visual resources. Signs approved as part of commercial development shall be incorporated into the design of the project and shall be subject to height, width, and lighting limitations and design standards to ensure that signs are visually compatible with surrounding areas and protect scenic views. Prohibit placement of signs, excluding traffic or public safety signs, which obstruct views to the ocean or beaches from public viewing areas or scenic roads.</p>	2016 First Public Draft Policy
<p><u>9-44. Billboards.</u> Prohibit the construction of new off-site commercial signs, including billboards.</p>	<u>Original LUP Policy 7-3:</u> Off-premise advertising structures shall be prohibited.
<p><u>9-45. Right-of-Way Signage.</u> Minimize the use of parking and directional signage and locate it so as to not encroach into any pedestrian path or sidewalk. Establish a program for creating consistent highway, directional, and parking signage, and remove or consolidate excess signage where feasible.</p>	2017 Planning Commission Public Draft Policy
<p><u>9-46. Underground Utilities Program.</u> Establish a citywide program to relocate existing overhead utilities underground as they are replaced or when funding for undergrounding becomes available. Prioritize areas where elimination of overhead utilities will most improve scenic and visual resources.</p>	<u>Original LUP Policy 7-4:</u> Utilities shall continue to be placed underground in all new developments.
<p><u>9-47. Utility Boxes.</u> Locate utilities including traffic control boxes, transformers, meters, backflow prevention devices, and others underground in vaults; or if above finish grade, in discrete locations outside of any pedestrian path or sidewalk.</p>	<u>Original LUP Policy 7-4:</u> Utilities shall continue to be placed underground in all new developments.
<p><u>9-48. Utilities in New Development.</u> Require applications for new development to include preliminary utilities plans to ensure that undergrounding and minimizing the negative visual impacts of utilities are considered during</p>	<u>Original LUP Policy 7-4:</u> Utilities shall continue to be placed underground in all new developments.

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<p>the earliest phases of project design. For commercial, multi-family development and new subdivisions, utilities shall be underground unless infeasible, such as in locations subject to erosion or with high water tables. For such cases, require utilities to be designed and sited in a manner to minimize impacts to coastal resources, and require the development to contribute in-lieu fees to support undergrounding utilities in other locations.</p>	
<p><u>9-49. Telecommunications Facilities.</u> Require all telecommunications facilities to place support facilities underground where feasible. New communication transmission lines shall be sited and designed to be located underground, except where doing so would result in a hazardous condition. Existing communication transmission lines should be relocated underground when they are replaced or when funding for undergrounding is available. Where undergrounding is not feasible, require facilities to be sited and designed in a manner that minimizes impacts to visual resources by co-locating facilities, utilizing a constructed disguise, or ensuring compatibility with surrounding development or natural character.</p>	<p>2016 First Public Draft Policy</p>