



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Board of Supervisors Chambers
500 County Center, Redwood City

ITEM 5

Applicant: **County of San Mateo**

Owners:..... **Various**

Location: **Various**

File Number: **PLN 2025-00232**

Project Description:

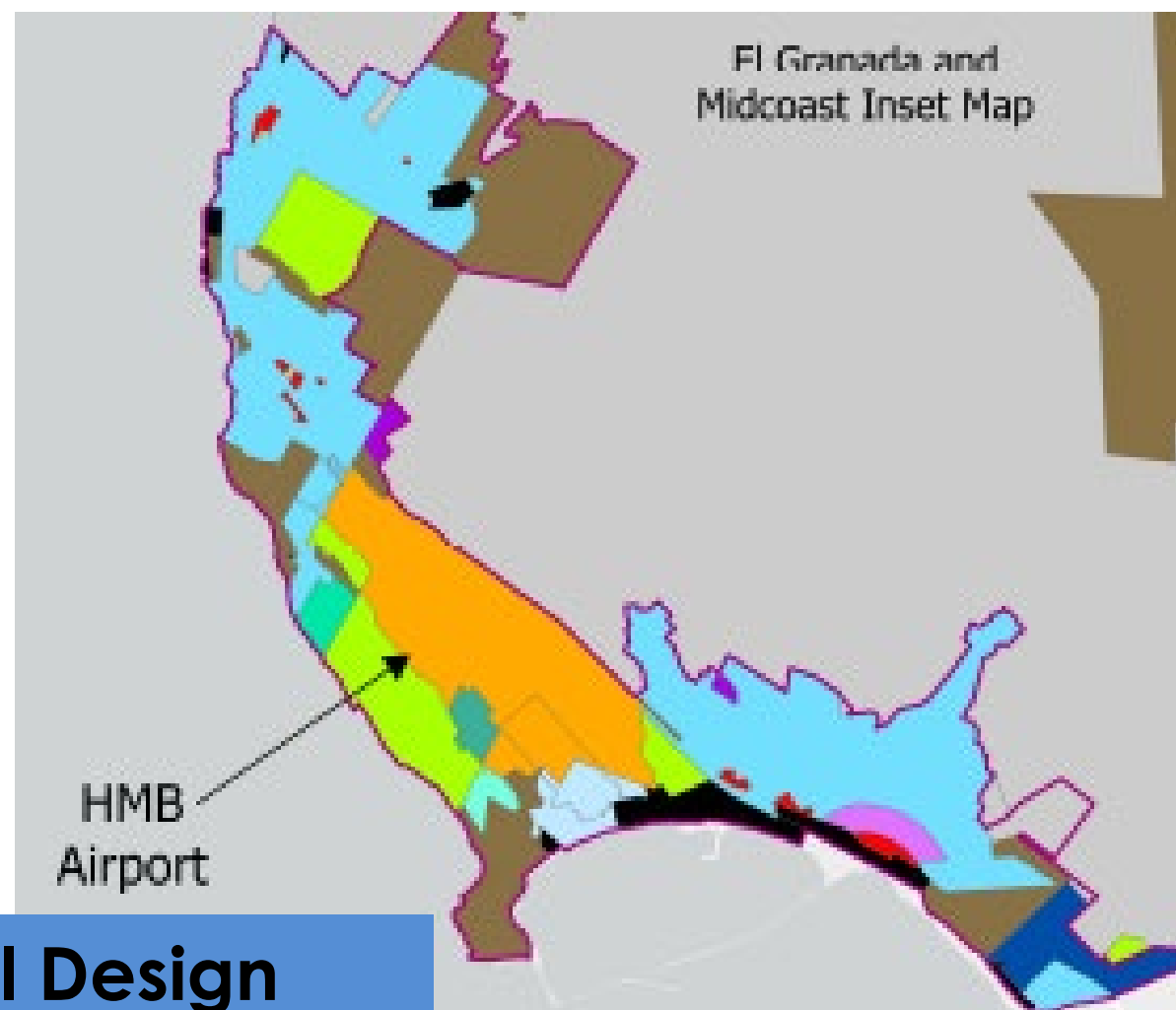
Consideration of an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 of the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations), regulating Design Review (DR) Districts, and related conforming zoning text amendments; a resolution directing submittal of the new Chapter 8.256, as an amendment to the County's Local Coastal Program, to the California Coastal Commission for review and certification; and a resolution amending the Planning and Building Department Planning Service Fee Schedule to add design review fees for ministerial review and exceptions.

PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT



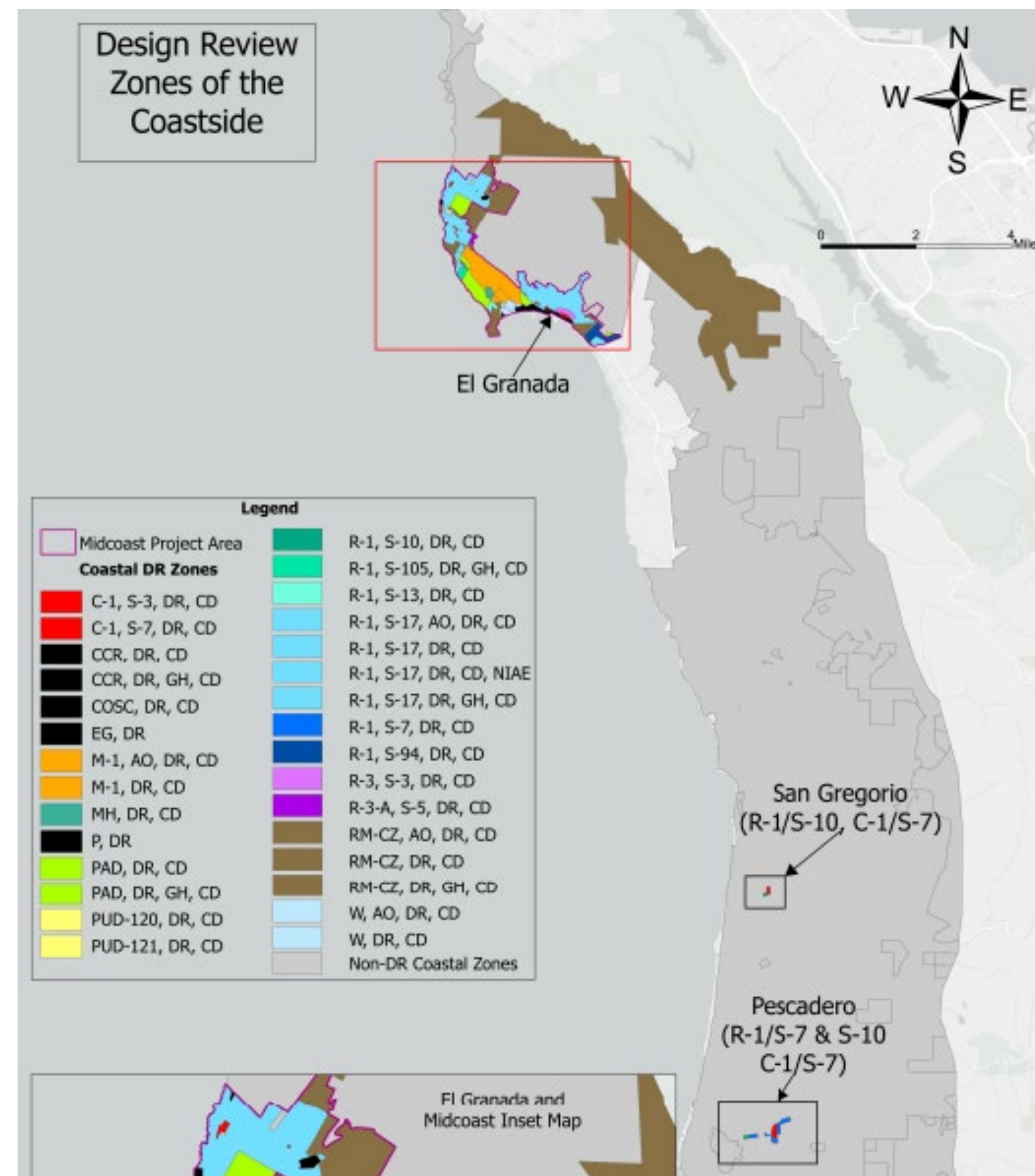
Objectives of the Design Review (DR) Ordinance Update Project

1. Revise current DR Zoning District design standards to be objective and enforceable
2. Establish a ministerial design review process in areas outside of the Coastal Zone, reducing project costs and time
3. Address Coastside Design Review Committee (CDRC) feedback and public concerns
4. Impose design review standards on small projects not requiring other permits



Coastal Design Review (DR) Areas

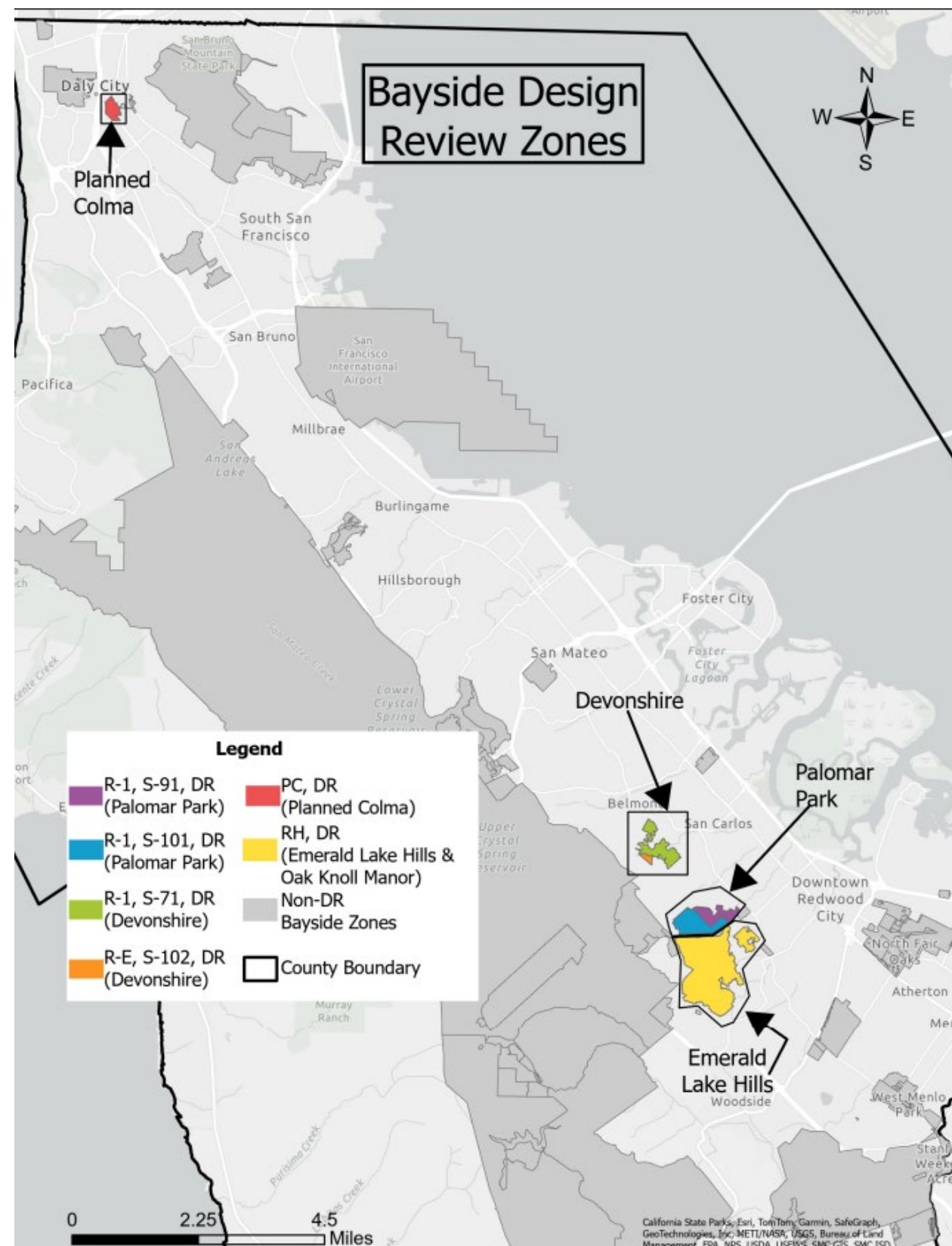
- Midcoast: Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Miramar
- Other Areas: San Gregorio, Pescadero



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Non-Coastal Design Review (DR) Areas

- Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll Manor
- Devonshire
- Palomar Park
- Planned Colma



COUNTY OF
SAN MATEO



Main Changes to Ordinance:

- DR Standards Table
- Objective Language
- Recommendations
- Ministerial Review
- Discretionary Review
- Story Poles, Building Height, and Lighting in Midcoast
- Exemptions



DR STANDARDS TABLE

New Table Format: Standards listed with applicable areas OR Project Type (e.g., ADU) checked with "X"

Areas:

- Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll, Palomar Park, Devonshire
- Midcoast
- All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)
 - Non-residential zoning districts or non-residential development in the Midcoast
 - San Gregorio and Pescadero

DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE					
No.	STANDARD	ADUs	Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH)... Palomar Park (PP)... Devonshire (DEV)	Midcoast	All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)
A	Building Siting				
1	For lots wider than 75 feet in area of proposed development, single story and low eave design shall be used in the transition area between the development and any adjoining areas designated for agriculture, recreation, or open space. The transition area for side-abutting development is defined as within 15 feet from both sides of a shared lot line. The building eave facing the shared lot line with adjoining open space shall be no higher than 12 feet or, when the adjoining open space area contains buildings within 15 feet of the shared lot line, the eave shall be no higher than 10% higher than the height of the adjoining building(s). (For low eave design, see Figures 11-15).	X (Montara Only)		X (Montara Only)	X
2	Structures are set back from the edge of bluffs and cliffs a distance equal to the maximum proposed height of the building or located-in areas of the property that are not visible, as viewed from scenic areas below.	X (Coastal zone only)		X (Source: CDM; other areas)	X
3	Locate and design new development and landscaping so that ocean views are not blocked from public viewing points such as public roads and publicly-owned lands.	X (Coastal zone only)		X (LCP 8.12.b)	X (LCP 8.12.b)
4	Development shall only be placed on or above a ridgeline if there is no other	X (Coastal)		X	X



Make Design Standards Objective

Subjective Language

- Minimize filling or placement of earth materials.
- Use an architectural style and design elements that complement the predominant style of nearby homes, only when such homes conform with the design standards.
- Locate the primary portion of the second stories toward the center of the first story and away from property lines whenever feasible.

Objective Language

- Prohibit raised building pads of more than 8 inches above the low side of the existing grade...
- The design of new buildings shall incorporate building and/or roof forms, colors, and/or materials of adjacent buildings and natural environment.
- In Midcoast, the Project eliminates the option for compliance with Daylight Plane or Façade Articulation to require both.



Former Standards Now Included as Recommendations

Subjective standards that could not be made objective (e.g., quantitative)

- Consider neighbor privacy when constructing new windows and outdoor areas
- Consider neighbor view blockage from primary windows
- Design buildings to allow for passive heating and cooling
- Face garages away from or set back from street
- If prominent garage is unavoidable, use decorative garage doors to be consistent with house architecture



New Ministerial Design Review Process - Non-Coastal Zone

Non-Coastal Zone

- Ministerial Review (no discretionary review)
Lower Fees:
 - \$861 for New Development
 - \$646 for Addition
- Allows for application of DR standards to State-streamlined housing projects

Table 1: Review Process by Project Type in Non-Coastal Zone

	Current Ordinance	Updated Ordinance
State-streamlined housing (e.g., SB 9, SB 35, ADUs)	Ministerial review with application of limited existing objective standards for SB 9 projects; <u>no objective standards for other housing types</u>	<u>Ministerial review with objective standards</u>
Non-State-streamlined housing (SFDs, Additions)	Discretionary review with objective and subjective standards	<u>Ministerial review with objective standards</u>



New Limited Ministerial Design Review Process – Coastal Zone

Coastal Zone

- Maintains discretionary review process for single-family homes and additions
- Makes previously-subjective standards objective
- Applies DR standards to ADUs

Table 2: Review Process by Project Type in Coastal Zone

Table 2: Review Process by Project Type in Coastal Zone		
	Current Ordinance	Updated Ordinance
State-streamlined housing (e.g., ADUs)	Ministerial review with no objective standards applied	Ministerial review with objective standards
Non-State-streamlined housing (SFDs, Additions)	Discretionary review with objective and subjective standards	Discretionary review with objective standards



New Design Review Fees

Ministerial Review Fees

- New Single Family Residential: \$861
- New Commercial/Multifamily Residential: \$861
- Single Family Residential Alteration/Addition; Detached/Attached ADUs: \$646

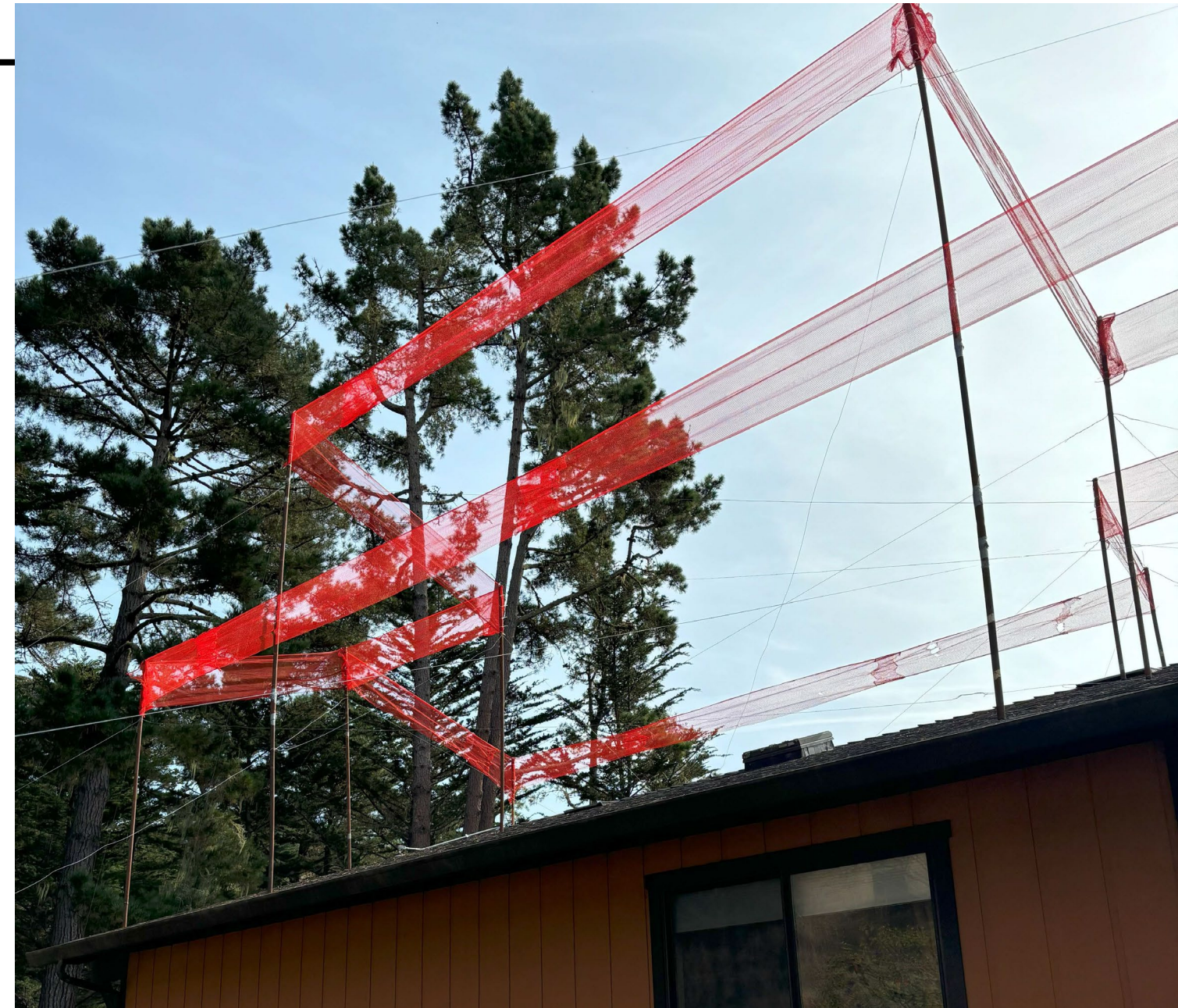
Exception Fees (added to applicable review fees)

- Minor Exception by Design Review Administrator: \$861
- Major Exception (via Use Permit from Planning Commission): \$4,079



Story Poles Required for Discretionary Review in Midcoast

- Strong Public Support for Story Poles
- Exempted from Story Poles:
 - Project 800 sf or less that meet setbacks and:
 - less than 16' height, ground floor, or
 - no change to roofline of 2nd or 3rd story addition
 - Not visible from street or residences within 50 feet

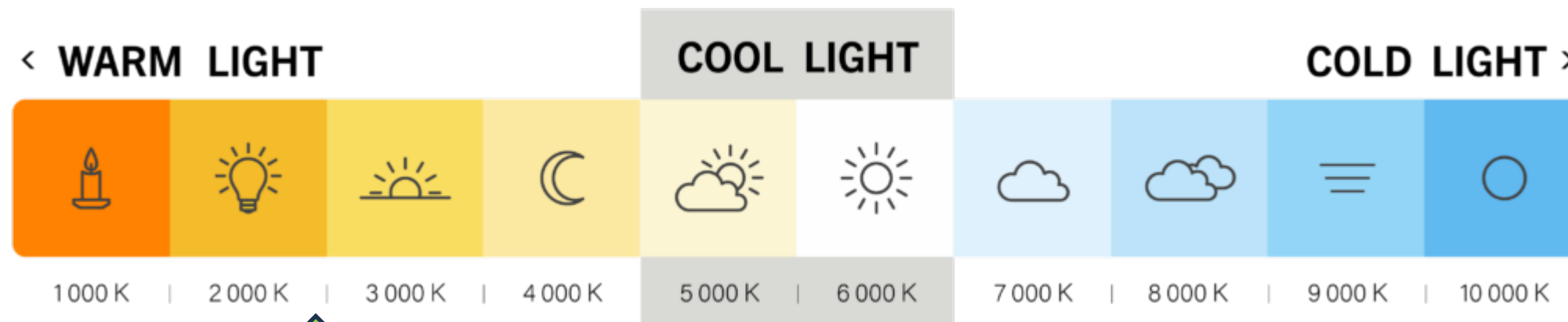




Exterior Lighting – Coastal Zone

Maximum of **2200k** for single-family and multi-family residential, institutional, commercial projects

- Dark Sky-compliant
- Applies to new and existing properties EXCEPT for:
 - Single-family residential: only on new construction or major remodel projects requiring a permit





Building Height Measurement in Urban Midcoast

- Currently: height measured based on average roofline to average grade
- Proposed: imposes familiar S-17 height measurement method: height measured as vertical distance from natural or existing grade to topmost point of building above

Urban, Midcoast Zoning Districts:

- C-1
- R-1
- M-1
- RM-CZ
- EG
- W*



Main Changes to Standards

- Bird-Strike Proof Window Treatment required on 90% of windows of:
 - new planned developments;
 - portions of new single-family homes above 30 feet;
 - building sides of new/renovated multifamily housing where glass comprises 40% or more of building side surface area;
 - new commercial, institutional, and industrial construction projects; and
 - projects that replace 50% or more of the existing exterior glass subject to new construction requirement for relevant use type listed above
- Required on 100% of glass railings, transparent corners, fly-through features, surfaces above a green roof
- Exempt: 100% affordable multifamily housing, first-floor storefronts, operable sash windows



Main Changes to Standards – All DR Areas

Small Projects not Requiring Other Permits

- Imposes design review standards on small projects that don't require other County permits (exterior painting, lighting)
 - Gives County authority to enforce DR standards for alterations that do not comply
-



Exemption from Design Review

- Codifies current practices with exemption for small projects/additions
- Non-Coastal Zone: maintains exemption up to 500 sf
- Coastal Zone: expands exemption from 150 sf to 500 sf
 - Must meet setbacks
 - Must be under 16' in height



PUBLIC REVIEW OF ORDINANCE

Project Webpage:

<https://www.smcgov.org/planning/design-review-dr-ordinance-update-project>

Public Meetings:

Bayside Design Review Committee: September, October 2025

Coastside Design Review Committee: August, September, October 2025

Midcoast Community Council: October 2025; February 2026

Planning Commission recommendations on January 28 and May 13, 2026 (revised to address public input on lighting and bird safety)

Working with Interested Parties: Reviews with design professionals, developers, environmental and housing groups, and interested members of the public



WHEN WILL ORDINANCE TAKE EFFECT?

- **Non-Coastal Zone:** 30 days after Design Review Ordinance adoption by the Board of Supervisors
- **Coastal Zone:**
 - After Board adoption, staff will submit Design Review Ordinance to California Coastal Commission for certification
 - Effective immediately upon California Coastal Commission certification



RECOMMENDATION

Public hearing for consideration of an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 of the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations):

1. Open public hearing
2. Close public hearing
3. Adopt an **ordinance** repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) regulating Design Review (DR) Districts, and related conforming zoning text amendments, previously introduced to the Planning Commission on May 13, 2026; and
4. Adopt a **resolution** directing submittal of the new Chapter 8.256 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) regulating Design Review (DR) Districts, and related conforming zoning text amendments, as amendments to the County's Local Coastal Program, to the California Coastal Commission for review and certification; and
5. Adopt a **resolution** amending the Planning and Building Department Planning Service Fee Schedule to add design review fees for ministerial review and exceptions.



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