Staff Report Details (With Text)

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Attachments:	1. 19-05-08_ATT No 1_Summary of Comments from Community Meetings.pdf, 2. 19-05-08_ATT No 2_Summary of Comments from Online Survey.pdf, 3. 19-05-08_ATT No 3_Key Findings and Recommendations Memorandum.pdf, 4. 19-05-08_ATT No 4_R1_R1 Hillside Draft Recommendations.pdf, 5. 19-05-08_ATT No 5_Public Comment.pdf				

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
5/8/2019	1	Joint City Council/ Planning Commission		

CC:PC - Joint Study Session to Review, Discuss and Provide Direction on the Single-Family Residential Design Study Recommendations as Prepared by John Kaliski Architects.
Meeting Date: May 8, 2019

Contact Person/Dept: Sol Blumenfeld/Community Development Director
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Fiscal Impact: Yes [] No [X] **General Fund:** Yes [] No [X]

Public Hearing: [] **Action Item:** [X] **Attachments:** [X]

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council/Planning Commission (05/03/19); (Posted) City Website (04/18/19); Single Family Residential Design Study Email List (04/19/2019); GovDelivery (04/18/19); NextDoor (04/23/19).

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (05/01/19)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council and Planning Commission receive a presentation regarding the Single-Family Residential Zone Design Study (Study) prepared by John Kaliski Architects and

provide staff direction related to proceeding with proposed text amendments to implement the Study.

BACKGROUND

On July 10, 2017, the City and John Kaliski Architects (JKA) entered into an agreement to conduct the Single-Family Residential Zone Design Study to address community concerns regarding "mansionization" in the single-family residential zones.

Over the past year, Current Planning staff and JKA held community meetings with the eight single-family residential neighborhoods in order to obtain input from residents regarding single-family residential design concerns. Community meetings were held with residents from Blair Hills/Hetzler Road, Carlson Park, Park West, Studio Village, Blanco Park, Sunkist Park, McLaughlin, and Culver West. The Culver Crest neighborhood was analyzed in the first phase of the Study in order to address unique hillside neighborhood design and safety concerns, which resulted in the adoption of a prohibition of accessory dwelling units in December 2017; and the adoption of a specific overlay zone for the Upper Culver Crest and a new hillside grading ordinance in March 2019.

Working with Staff and the community, JKA has prepared the attached Study which summarizes the outcome of the community meetings and presents a number of proposed zone text amendments to respond to community design and development concerns in the single-family neighborhoods.

DISCUSSION

Initial Findings and Recommendations:
Between June 26 and August 28, 2018, staff and JKA met with residents from each of the single-family neighborhoods noted above to discuss neighborhood conditions. Prior to the community meetings, an online survey was also conducted for those residents who could not attend the community meetings.

Each community meeting consisted of a 30-minute survey exercise using photographs of neighborhood homes and blocks. Attendees indicated their design and development preferences on photos with red and green colored cards and the overall preferences were noted for each of the images. The recorded comments provided feedback on building design, architectural style, landscaping, and the size and placement of buildings. The exercise was followed by a more general conversation on neighborhood design and specific neighborhoods issues. The online survey paralleled the community meetings using the same photographs and providing the opportunity for public comments regarding building design.

The results of these meetings and surveys are found in Attachments Nos. 1 and 2 and the neighborhood preferences are summarized below and in Attachment No 3:

1. Homes should not be built to maximize the existing zoning envelope and allowable floor area ratio (FAR).
2. Side yard setback standards should provide adequate sunlight, air, and privacy to neighboring

properties.

3. Second-story additions should be set behind the primary roofline and match the architectural style, materials, and roof form of the original home.
4. Maintain in a consistent architectural style with the original Culver City tract (Traditional/Ranch Style) or allow modern styles that do not maximize the allowable zoning envelope and floor area ratio (FAR). Incorporate complementary landscaping.
5. Long time Culver City residents enjoy smaller houses that provide ample space for privacy, sunlight, and air. Newer Culver City residents enjoy larger houses that provide space for growing families and are consistent with modern development trends.

Based on the key findings, staff and JKA collaborated on the final recommendations for implementation into the Zoning Code.

The recommendations fall into two categories:

1. Recommendations for typical R1 properties; and
2. Recommendations for R1 Hillside properties.

Summary of Study Recommendations

The City Council and Planning Commission are being asked at this Study Session to consider public testimony and provide direction on the Study findings. The findings are summarized in table form in Attachment No. 4.

Definition of R1 Hillside:

Sloped and flat lots present different planning and development considerations. JKA has proposed different regulations for parcels with a slope greater than fifteen percent (15%) (R1 Hillside). Hillside specific zoning regulations currently apply to all properties in the Upper Culver Crest (Culver Crest Hillside Overlay). JKA and staff propose to merge the Culver Crest Hillside Overlay Zone and R1 Hillside Overlay Zone to create one zoning designation applicable to all R-1 Hillside properties with a slope of greater than fifteen percent (15%). While Culver Crest had some very specific concerns for their neighborhood, many of those concerns are applicable to other hillside areas and the proposed code amendments (Attachment No. 4) would apply to all R-1 Hillsides. The proposed R-1 Hillside development standards that differ from those that are already approved in the Culver Crest are shown highlighted in Table 1 below. For simplicity, rather than apply the standard to a specific geographic area as was done with the Upper Culver Crest, staff recommends applying the standard to any properties with a slope greater than 15%. Any standards specific to the existing needs of the Upper Culver Crest would then be called out separately in the overlay zone.

Table 1: Differences between Culver Crest Overlay and R-1 Hillside Overlay

Standard	Existing Hillside Overlay	Proposed R1 Hillside
Minimum 1st Floor Side Yard Setback	10% of Lot Width but not <5 feet and not > 10 feet	12% of Lot Width but not <6 feet and not >12 feet
Minimum Street Side Second Floor Setback	24% of Lot Width but not <12 feet and not >24 feet	16% Lot Width but not <8 feet and not >16 feet
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	15 feet	30 feet
Floor Area Ratio Definition	Residential floor area shall include mezzanines, covered porches, covered patios, and accessory buildings in addition to any floor area within the main dwelling unit but shall not include detached garages. Floor area shall be defined as the area confined from exterior wall to exterior wall. Areas within a ceiling height greater than one (1) story, as defined by this Title, will be counted twice towards floor area. Staircases, elevator shafts, and the like, shall be counted as one (1) plane per floor.	Residential floor area shall include mezzanines, and accessory buildings in addition to any floor area within the main dwelling unit. Floor area shall be defined as the area confined from exterior wall to exterior wall. Areas within a ceiling height greater than one (1) story, as defined by this Title, will be counted twice towards floor area. Staircases, elevator shafts, and the like, shall be counted as one (1) plane per floor.
Dwelling Unit Definition	Any structure designed or used for shelter or housing that contains permanent provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation occupied by or intended for one (1) or more persons on a long-term basis. A dwelling unit shall have no more than one (1) kitchen.	Any structure designed or used for shelter or housing that contains permanent provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation occupied by or intended for one (1) or more persons on a long-term basis. A dwelling unit shall have no more than one (1) kitchen. All habitable rooms within a dwelling unit shall be accessed from the interior of the structure.

Floor Area Ratio, Slope Band Methodology, and Lot Coverage:

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is the ratio of floor area that can be built as a percentage of the overall lot area. JKA proposes a reduction in FAR from 0.60 to 0.45. A 0.45 FAR is more consistent with surrounding jurisdictions such as Santa Monica and Burbank that have reduced their FAR in response to concerns about mansionization. A major concern of Culver City residents was that new homes were too large and allowed excessive building area on a parcel. Reducing the FAR to 0.45 allows for additional floor area for existing smaller homes but reduces excessive bulk and mass. On lots greater than 10,000 square feet, JKA recommends an FAR of 0.35. Excluding Culver Crest and Blair Hills Neighborhoods, approximately twenty (20) single-family homes are located on lots larger than 10,000 square feet.

FAR for R1 Hillside properties is proposed to be regulated by “Slope Band” Methodology (Please see

Table 2). Slope Band Methodology was recently adopted for hillside homes in the Culver Crest neighborhood as part of Phase I of the R1 Zone Single-Family Residential Design Study. Slope Band Methodology provides a more precise method to regulate building size than FAR alone and refers to incremental reductions in the maximum allowed FAR based on the average slope of the property with the intent of creating a better fit between maximum building size and mass relative to area topography.

Table 2: Proposed R1 Hillside FAR

Dwelling Size	Maximum Floor Area Allowed	
Maximum Area	Slope	FAR
	< 15%	0.45
	15% to 30%	0.40
	>30% to 45%	0.35
	>45% to 60%	0.30
	>60% to 100%	0.25
	>100%	0.00

Recommended maximum FAR would range between 0.45 for lots with a slope of less than 15 percent and 0.25 for lots with a slope between 60 and 100 percent. Establishing a maximum FAR of 0.45 would reduce mass and bulk compared to the current 0.60 FAR standard. Slope band methodology would further consider site constraints of steeper properties including hillside stability and viewsheds from down slope. Final slope calculations for individual properties would be determined through a topographic survey submitted during the plan check process for new construction or renovation projects.

Lot Coverage:

JKA proposes the introduction of a maximum lot coverage standard of 40 percent based upon original tract coverage conditions in Culver City. This standard is proposed as a result of resident input that focused on reducing on-site bulk and mass of a structure and maintaining privacy between neighboring properties. A maximum 40 percent lot coverage standard would create open space around a building, reduce the ability to maximize the building envelope, and maintain existing ratios of built to unbuilt area.

Current standards require all attached garages to count towards FAR while detached garages do not. Converted ADU square footage does not count towards FAR, but new ADU square footage does count towards FAR. This may further encourage residents to build detached rear garages in order to maximize floor area ratio. In order to further reduce building mass and bulk, the City Council and Planning Commission also need to consider how accessory structures, such as garages and ADUs, will contribute towards lot coverage and FAR.

For example: Using a 5,000 square foot lot and assuming a 0.45 FAR, one could build 2,250 square feet of habitable space (as seen in Table 3). If someone were to build an attached garage and full sized ADU, this would leave approximately 1,250 square feet of additional space for main dwelling unit square footage.

Table 3: FAR and Coverage Standard Comparisons

Standard	FAR (0.6)	FAR (0.45)	40% Coverage*	FAR (0.6)	FAR (0.45)	40% Coverage*
Lot Area	6750	6750	6750	5000	5000	5000
FAR SqFt	4050	3037	2700	3000	2250	2000
ADU	600	600	600	600	600	600
Garage	400	400	400	400	400	400
Final Square Footage	3050	2037	1700	2000	1250	1000
*Coverage standards only apply to single plane of coverage over entire lot. Unlike FAR double tall floor or multiple floors on top of one another are only counted once.						

In order to clarify detached garages and FAR, staff recommends refining existing Zoning Code (Code) language. Existing Code language was adopted to encourage rear detached garages that reduce visual impacts on the public right-of-way. Unfortunately, the language has been used to build detached garages in the front yard while maximizing square footage. The proposed revised language would clarify that detached garages in the rear 1/3 of a lot would be excluded from FAR, thus encouraging rear loaded garages and helping to reduce visual impacts on the public right-of-way.

Minimum Unit Size:

A minimum unit size of 2,500 square feet was previously approved for Culver Crest Hillside. This would also be proposed for the R1 Hillside but would not apply to regular R1 properties. The minimum unit size would apply to R1 Hillside properties due to the typography and odd lot sizes in hillside communities. However, the minimum unit size would be decreased to 2,250 square feet to fall more in-line with the maximum FAR of a standard 5,000 square foot lot per the slope band analysis.

Additional Setback Provisions:

Proposed modifications to setbacks would include changes to the second-floor front yard setback, side yard setbacks, and rear yard setback (Please see Table 4). Setbacks refer to the minimum distance a structure must be separated from the property line. The proposed changes are shown in strike thru and blue text.

Table 4: Proposed Setbacks

	Minimum setbacks required. See Section 17.300.020 (Setback Regulations and Exceptions).	
Zone	**R1**	**R1 Hillside**
Front	20 feet - Single Story Structure	
	~~25 feet~~ 30 feet - Second Story of Two Story Structure	
Side (A)	~~Interior Sides (5 feet)~~ ~~Street side (corner) 5 feet single story structures~~ ~~5 feet - two story structures, plus minimum 5 feet stepback for second floor~~ ~~10 feet - two story structure without minimum 5 feet second floor stepback~~	
	First Floor: 10% of lot width, but not <5 feet and not >10 feet	First Floor: 12% of lot width, but not <6 feet and not >12 feet
	Second Floor (Narrow Setback): 16% of lot width, but not <8 feet and not >16 feet	
	Second Floor (Wide Setback): 24% of lot width, but not <12 feet and not >24 feet	
Rear	~~15 feet~~ 30 Feet	
(A) An applicant can exceed minimum but cannot reduce minimum required setback. Narrow Setback will automatically apply to any street-side side yard.		

New project second story front yard setbacks would increase from 25 to 30 feet. A 30-foot setback will help to address the appearance of building mass along the street frontage to help maintain the existing neighborhood character. A 30-foot second story front yard setback would result in a ten (10) foot stepback from the twenty (20) foot first story front yard setback.

New side yard setbacks would be based on lot width. First floor setbacks would be ten (10) percent lot width but not less than five (5) feet and not more than ten (10) feet. First floor setbacks on R1 Hillside properties would be twelve (12) percent lot width but not less than six (6) feet and not more than twelve (12) feet. Second floor setbacks would incorporate a “narrow” setback and a “wide” setback to provide greater articulation to the second floor. Property owners would have the option to choose which second floor side yard setbacks would be considered narrow and wide except that a narrow second floor setback would automatically apply to a street facing side yard. A narrow setback along a street side setback would require the wide setback next to the neighboring residence, thus creating more space between the two units. Narrow second floor setbacks would be established at sixteen (16) percent lot width, but not less than eight (8) feet and not more than sixteen (16) feet. Wide second floor setback would be established at 24 percent lot width, but not less than twelve (12) feet and not more than 24 feet. Offsetting second-floor floor area will reduce overall mass and bulk of upper stories while also providing for additional light, air, and privacy.

For all setbacks based on yard width, the homeowner can propose a setback larger than the maximum but cannot propose a setback less than the minimum. These setbacks would help to reduce the mass and bulk of homes in relation to neighboring properties.
Rear yard setbacks are proposed to increase from fifteen (15) feet to 30 feet. A 30-foot setback will maintain the existing pattern of tract development while addressing privacy concerns when additions and new construction extend past the rear of neighboring structures.

Minimum distance between main and accessory structures is also proposed to increase from five (5) feet to eight (8) feet in order to provide more light and air on-site.

Height and Developable Area:

Height would remain at two (2) stories and 30 feet for sloped roofs and two (2) stories and 26 feet for flat roofs; however, the maximum height of any structure would include parapet walls. Parapet walls can currently extend up to five (5) feet above the building rooftop but often increase the appearance of structure mass and bulk. Including parapet walls as part of maximum building height will help to reduce this mass and bulk.

The recently adopted Hillside Overlay limited height and bulk and mass along top of slope by establishing a maximum of one (1) story and fourteen (14) feet height on slopes of greater than 50 percent. This is proposed for the R1 Hillside in order to maintain consistency.

Optional Standards:
Optional standards were considered by JKA that did not necessarily align with more common development standard sections. Some of these standards are included and described below for inclusion in the Code, but have not been proposed as specific code language for adoption yet:

- Front facing garages setback from the face of the façade by a minimum of 3 feet.
    - This standard will help to increase articulation of garages that are placed facing the public right-of-way by requiring a break in first floor façade.

- Drought tolerant requirements for all new landscaping proposals.
    - Drought tolerant requirements will help to save water and advance environmental goals of the City and State.

- Tree and landscaping requirements for all new second-story additions and new two-story construction.
    - Tree planting requirements are proposed so that fast growing trees would help to shield second floor additions. The public was also favorable towards yards with well-maintained landscaping, so landscaping requirements would also be proposed. Code would require a Landscape Architect to prepare landscape plans for second story additions and new two-story construction.

New Definitions:
JKA and staff have proposed several new or modified definitions to better regulate the components of a single-family homes in Culver City.

“Attic” is proposed to help better define when attic space transitions to habitable floor space and an additional story.

a. Attic - The area between roof framing and the ceiling of the rooms below that is not habitable per Building Code standard but may be reached by ladder and used for storage or mechanical equipment. Any room with less than seventy (70) square feet in area or less than seven (7) feet in height would constitute an attic.

“Carport” and “Porte Cochere” definitions are expanded to reduce architectural incompatibility along the front façade of a structure.

b. Carport - A roofed structure over a driveway, the purpose of which is to shelter a vehicle. Carports are prohibited in front of street-facing facades and must match the architectural

style, materials, roof forms, and pitch of the main structure.

c. Porte Cochere - A roofed structure extending from the entrance of a building over an adjacent driveway, the purpose of which is to shelter a person entering or exiting a vehicle. Porte Cocheres are prohibited in front of street-facing facades and must match the architectural style, materials, roof forms, and pitch of the main structure.

"Covered" is proposed to help better define "Floor Area, Residential".

d. Covered - Any enclosed, semi-enclosed, or unenclosed building area that is covered by a solid roof.

"Dwelling Unit" is proposed to help further define what constitutes a single-family dwelling and reduce the potential for unpermitted separate living space within an existing single-family dwelling.

e. Dwelling Unit - Any structure designed or used for shelter or housing that contains permanent provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation occupied by or intended for one (1) or more persons on a long-term basis. A dwelling unit shall have no more than one (1) kitchen. All habitable rooms within a dwelling unit shall be accessed from the interior of the structure.

"Floor Area, Residential" is proposed to help better define what makes up the floor area of a single-family home to ensure bulk and mass of new and expanded structures is kept consistent with the intent of adopted codes.

f. Floor Area, Residential - Residential floor area shall include mezzanines and accessory buildings in addition to any floor area within the main dwelling unit. Floor area shall be defined as the area confined from exterior wall to exterior wall. Areas within a ceiling height greater than one (1) story, as defined by this Title, will be counted twice towards floor area. Staircases, elevator shafts, and the like, shall be counted as one (1) plane per floor.

"Kitchen" is proposed to help better define what constitutes a cooking area and reduce the ability for unpermitted separate living space with an existing single-family dwelling. Some jurisdictions use additional items to define a kitchen, such as garbage disposals, dishwashers, and sink drains of a certain diameter; However, staff recommends the proposed language to define what makes up a kitchen without unduly restricting facilities such as wet bars in other parts of a house.

g. Kitchen - Any room or space within a structure containing a combination of the following facilities that are capable of being used for the cooking or preparation of food: oven/microwave oven, stove, refrigerator exceeding six (6) cubic feet, and sink.

"Mezzanine/Loft" is proposed to help better define how a mezzanine will be counted towards floor area and story calculations when proposed as part of a single-family home.

h. Mezzanine/Loft - An intermediate or fractional floor area between the floor and ceiling of a main story. A mezzanine/loft floor area shall be deemed a full story when it covers more

than one-third of the area of the story directly underneath said mezzanine/loft area or the floor to plate height of the mezzanine/loft exceeds (fourteen) 14 feet.

"Story" is defined to help ensure bulk and massing of new and expanded structures is kept consistent with the intent of adopted codes.

i. Story - That portion of a building included between the surface of any floor and the surface of the next floor above it, or if there is no floor above, then the space between the floor and the ceiling above. A story shall be defined as the floor to plate height and can be no taller than fourteen (14) feet.

The proposed new definitions will help ensure consistency in reviewing proposed building modifications and new construction plans.

Additional Items discussed by the Community:
Community members addressed several other design issues during community meetings Staff is looking for City Council and Planning Commission direction as to whether to include them as part of the Zoning Code text amendment.

- Primary entries and building orientation: During community meetings, residents were more accepting of building façade that did not close themselves off to the street. The proposed codes do not have specific requirements for front facing doors or windows.

- Windows, balconies, and roof decks: There was a concern about neighboring privacy due to viewsheds from second floor windows, balconies, and roof decks. The proposed code language helps to increase privacy by requiring larger setbacks but additional regulations have not been proposed. Ideas could include proposing setbacks or enclosures of second story roof decks and requirements for the orientation of roof decks away or towards certain yards.

- Garage placement: Residents were more accepting of garages that did not take up the majority of, nor detract from, the aesthetics of a front façade. Floor area ratio exceptions for detached garages in rear yards would encourage garages that reduce aesthetic impacts on front yards, but that would not prohibit front loaded front yard garages.

- Building façade and design: Residents were concerned that the desire for visually pleasing and architecturally compatible homes was not always realized in final design. This included concerns about additions that did not match architectural style of the original house and roofs that were not consistent with form, pitch, and materials of the original roof.

Exception Process:
The City Council has approved an exception process for setback standards in the Culver Crest Hillside Overlay. Due to unique topographic constraints that do not occur elsewhere in the City, hillside properties may need different considerations to meet setback standards. Staff proposes including the setback exception process in the R-1 Hillside zone. Applicants would need to make findings that special circumstances apply to the property and that approval of the exception would not be detrimental to health, safety, or general welfare. Staff would review exception proposals for consistency with findings. Any exception request by the public would be decided by the Planning Commission.

- **Exceptions Findings**. Exceptions to setback standards in the R1 Hillside zone shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission shall consider and record the decision in writing with the findings on which the decision is based. The exception may be approved, with or without conditions, only after making all of the following findings:
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    - There are special circumstances applicable to the property (e.g. location, shape, size, depth, surroundings, and/or topography), or to the intended use of the property, so that the strict application of this Title denies the property owner privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the vicinity and under identical zoning districts.

    - Approval of the exception would not be detrimental to the public health, interest, safety, or general welfare and would not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity and in the same zoning district.

CONCLUSION:

Staff and JKA met with single-family neighborhoods and conducted extensive community outreach to obtain input on various neighborhood design issues related to single-family development. The proposed recommendations reflect feedback from community meetings and address many of the neighborhood concerns. The proposed zoning standards are sensitive to existing neighborhood character while allowing for appropriate and managed growth and development.

Staff will prepare draft Zoning Code text language based upon the Study Session direction and return, first to Planning Commission, then to City Council with final language for consideration.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

When Zoning Code Amendment P2019-0036-ZCA is presented formally to Planning Commission and City Council, final CEQA Determination will be made. Staff believes that a categorical exemption will apply.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There are no fiscal impacts related to this item.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Summary of Comments from Community Meetings
2. Summary of Comments from Online Survey
3. JKA Key Findings and Recommendations Memorandum
4. JKA Draft Recommendations for R1 Development Standards

5. Written Public Comment Received by the Current Planning Division

MOTION

That the City Council and Planning Commission:

1. Receive and file Single-Family Residential Zone Design Study recommendations as prepared by John Kaliski Architects (JKA) and provide direction to Current Planning Division as deemed appropriate.