



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council
Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report

File #: 16-1168, **Version:** 1

Item #: PH-3.

PC: Consideration of a Zoning Code Text Amendment, P2017-0117-ZCA, amending the Zoning Code as it relates to the standards and requirements for front yard trellis structures, including Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Section 17.300.020.

Meeting Date: July 12, 2017

Contact Person/Dept: Gabriela Silva, Associate Planner;
Michael Allen, Contract Planning Manager
Marian Aspnes, Code Enforcement Services Manager

Phone Number: (310) 253-5736

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒

Action Item: ☐

Attachments: ☒

Public Notification: (Email) Master Notification List (06/28/17); (Posted) City website (06/28/17); (Published) in Culver City News (06/22/17)

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (06/29/2017)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 2017-P014 (Attachment No. 1) recommending to the City Council approval of Zoning Code Text Amendment P2017-0117-ZCA related to front yard trellis structures.

PROCEDURES

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and the Planning Commission poses questions to staff as desired.
2. Chair opens the public hearing, and receives comments from the general public.
3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
4. Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND

As part of a broader review of the Zoning Code, the Enforcement Services Division and Current Planning Division staff have identified several zoning code sections that require modification including those pertaining to “front yard trellis structures”. Over the past several years many residents have inquired about installing trellis-style structures in their front yards, in particular along the front property line at the center of the property, and as part of a decorative front yard fence. Some residents have installed such structures without obtaining City approval. The City’s Zoning Code does not contain provisions to permit these structures and unless they are permitted the City is compelled to require their removal when they are discovered in the field by the City’s Enforcement Services Division. Since there are many of these kinds of trellis structures currently installed in front yards in violation of the Zoning Code, staff believes that it may be prudent to modify the zoning provisions to permit them.

Zoning Codes are a product of their times and the original purpose of the front yard building restriction was to ensure residential properties are not “walled off” from the street and sidewalk. It is staff’s opinion that these types of structures in front yards do not wall off front yards, do not otherwise create negative impacts upon residential neighborhoods, and are desired by property owners.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The relevant Zoning Code sections that require amendment to permit front yard trellis structures are:

- CCMC Section 17.300.020.E: Allowed Projections into Setbacks - Trellis Structures in Front Yard. The Zoning Code currently specifies minimum required setbacks for residential zones;
- CCMC Chapters 17.210 and 17.300: Allowable projections or encroachments are listed in Chapter 17.300. Specifically, CCMC Section 17.300.020 - Setback Regulations and Exceptions provides standards and requirements on measurement and limitations on use of setbacks, as well as exemptions from setbacks; and
- CCMC Section 17.300.020.E - Table 3-1 - Allowed Projections into Setbacks; and CCMC Section 17.300.030 - Fences, Hedges, and Walls: Table 3-1 in Section 17.300.020.E provides a list of architectural features, equipment, and structures (e.g. roof eaves, carports) that may project into a required setback, specifies which setbacks can be encroached into, and by how much. The table also provides limitations on height, width, or other criteria appropriate to the specific feature. Separately, CCMC Section 17.300.030 identifies standards for walls and fences that can be located within any part of a front, side, or rear yard setback. Both sections identify features that may encroach into a required setback and which are intended to enhance a property the aesthetics of a site. Since many of the requests and field examples of trellis structures encountered by staff are typically integrated as part of a front yard fence, it is appropriate to address these structures in this context. Further, the proposed amendment would add freestanding trellis structures to the list of allowable projections within Table 3-1, in a manner that is consistent with the setback allowances for fences.

More specifically, the proposed amendment to Section 17.300.020.E, Table 3-1, specifies that trellis structures will be allowed within the front yard setback of a residentially zoned property provided specific criteria are met. The first criteria are dimensional limitations to no more than eight (8) feet in height, six (6) feet in width, and two (2) feet in depth. In addition, such structures would also be required to maintain a clearance of 5 feet from the intersection of a driveway or alley with a public street right-of-way and a clearance of 15 feet from the intersection of two public street right-of-ways, similar to the pedestrian safety sightline clearances required for fences under Section 17.300.030 of the CCMC.

SUMMARY

By allowing such structures in front yard areas and with the standards and restrictions proposed, the Zoning Code will address changes in the trends and preferences regarding aesthetics and site improvements in residential properties while providing clear standards for approval, enforcement, and preservation of safety and the general welfare.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

CCMC Section 17.630.010 requires public notification via a publication in the Culver City News, a minimum of fourteen (14) days prior to the formal Public Hearing. Accordingly, a public notice was published on June 22, 2017. In addition, the public notice was posted on the City website and distributed electronically on June 28, 2017. As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any public comments, in writing or any other form, with regard to the proposed Zoning Code Amendment in response to the public notice.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The proposed Zoning Code Amendment (P2017-0117-ZCA) is within the scope of the Culver City General Plan Update Program EIR approved on September 24, 1996 (PEIR 1), the Culver City Redevelopment Plan Amendment and Merger Program Subsequent EIR approved on November 16, 1998 (PEIR 2), no new significant information has been found that would impact either PEIR 1 or PEIR 2, and no new environmental analysis is required, pursuant to Sections 15162 and 15168 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Planning Commission Resolution No. 2017-P014
2. Exhibit A: Proposed Zoning Code Text Changes in “strikethrough/underline” format

MOTION

That the Planning Commission

1. Adopt Resolution No. 2017-P014 recommending to the City Council approval of Zoning Code Text Amendment P2017-0117-ZCA related to front yard trellis structures.