



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 18-0416, **Version:** 1

Item #: PH-2.

PC - Review of Recommendations Related to Hillside Density and Consideration of a Zoning Code Amendment (P2017-224-ZCA), Amending Chapter 17, Zoning, of the City of Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC), Section 17.400.095 - Residential Uses - Accessory Dwelling Units.

Meeting Date: November 15, 2017

Contact Person/Dept: Michael Allen / Contract Planning Manager
Sol Blumenfeld / Community Development Director

Phone Number: 310-253-5727

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒ **Action Item:** ☐ **Attachments:** ☒

Commission Action Required: Yes ☒ No ☐ **Date:**

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Planning Commission (11/09/17); (Posted) City Website (11/09/17); (Published) Los Angeles Times (11/1/17), (Published) Culver City News (11/02/17);

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (10/31/17)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution (Attachment No. 1), recommending to the City Council approval of Zoning Code Amendment (P2017-224-ZCA), amending Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC), Title 17 - Zoning (Zoning Code) Section 17.400.095 - Residential Uses - Accessory Dwelling Units, as it relates to the limitation and/or prohibition of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the Culver Crest area.

PROCEDURE:

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and Planning Commission poses questions to staff as desired.
2. Chair opens the public hearing, providing the applicant the first opportunity to speak, followed by 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

In order to address on-going concerns regarding development in the Culver Crest hillside neighborhood, the City Council adopted Urgency Ordinance No. 2017-005, establishing a 45-Day Moratorium on the issuance of any new building permit for development and construction in the Lower and Upper Culver Crest hillside neighborhoods.

On April 18, 2017 the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 2017-006, extending the temporary moratorium by 10 months and 15 days (including a reduction in the area and properties subject to the moratorium) in order to allow the City time to thoroughly research options for regulating the development and construction on the hillside and prepare and present recommended regulations to the Planning Commission for recommendation to the City Council.

On May 30th, 2017 City Council approved an agreement with John Kaliski Architects (JKA) to develop hillside design and development standards. As a result, JKA submitted the proposed expanded scope of work to address concerns discussed at the December 20, 2016 meeting between community members and City staff.

To date, although the study continues to look at design guidelines more broadly for the hillside area, the project team has found the following issues as they relate to hillside development density and ADUs:

- (1) There are existing substandard roadway widths coupled with curvilinear roadway configuration that may limit or prohibit emergency vehicle access or response time during an emergency.
- (2) The eastern half of the Culver Crest neighborhood is in a “Very High Fire Hazard”; and
- (3) The area contains potential liquefaction zones and potential surficial landslide hazards.

DISCUSSION

JKA has been tasked with outlining planning methods and providing recommendations to guide design and development within the Culver Crest hillside area as part of its study of large single family development. The Culver Crest hillside study has found that the neighborhood is constrained by severe safety concerns related to fire and landslide areas depicted in Map Nos. 1 and No. 2 (attached).

In some cases a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone overlap with Liquefaction Zones that have a potential for surficial landslides. The confluence of these hazardous conditions and substandard roadway widths could preclude emergency vehicle access and impact emergency response times.

Based on feedback during two community meetings, review of the existing Zoning Code, City geotechnical reports and studies, other City documents and plans, and review of recent State legislation related to ADUs, JKA has recommended the City consider hillside safety issues in preparing development standards; define certain hillside streets as substandard; limit or prohibit further intensification of uses in areas where there is a safety impact related to further development, such as Culver Crest; and limit additional density, specifically with respect to the location of ADUs.

The potential approaches suggested by JKA to limiting/prohibiting ADUs include the following:

1. Identifying substandard street widths which cannot support additional density with ADUs. (Map 1)

Street widths may limit the response time of emergency vehicle access. Numerous California cities define streets as substandard in hillside neighborhoods when they do not meet minimum curb to curb dimensions, therefore imposing additional restrictions on development.

2. Identifying hazardous conditions that constrain further single family development with ADUs and prohibit new ADUs in the Culver Crest neighborhood where identified. (Map 2)

Previously documented hazards including wildfire hazard, liquefaction and potential for surficial landslides, noted in the Culver City Hazards Mitigation Plan, suggest prohibiting additional hillside density.

As a result of the overlapping hazardous conditions found in the Study, including potential very high fire severity, landslide, liquefaction, as well as the potential for limited emergency response times or access due to substandard roadway widths, staff proposes the prohibition of ADUs within the area as shown in Map 4-2.

Staff also preliminarily examined narrow roadway widths relative to other hazards that may impact emergency services in the only other hillside residential single family neighborhood in the City, Blair Hills, and determined that there were fewer streets with substandard widths and hazardous conditions related to liquefaction and potential surficial landslides in the area. Therefore staff recommends that this area be studied further and, if warranted, that an additional amendment be prepared thereafter to address density related to ADUs in the Blair Hills neighborhood.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Pursuant to Sections 15162 and 15168 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Zoning Code Text Amendment (P2017-0224-ZCA) is within the scope of the Culver City General Plan Update Program EIR (PEIR 1, September 1996) and the Culver City Redevelopment Plan Amendments and Merger Program Subsequent EIR (PEIR 2, November 16, 1998). No new significant information has been found that would impact the environmental analysis for PEIR 1 or PEIR 2; therefore, no new environmental analysis is required for the subject Zoning Code Amendment.

SUMMARY

The hillside study has recommended limiting additional density within hillside areas due high fire danger and potential liquefaction zones. The Culver City Hazards Mitigation Plan indicates the eastern half of the Culver Crest neighborhood is in a “Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and that Landslide Hazard Zones which have the potential for surficial slides are found within the Culver Crest neighborhood. Therefore staff recommends further regulation of ADU’s in hillside areas as identified Map 4-2 of the attached ordinance.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There are no fiscal impacts related to this Zoning Code Amendment.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution
2. Exhibit A - Zoning Code text amendments, including Hillside Area Prohibiting ADUs, Map 4-2
3. Map 1 - Existing Right of Way Map
4. Map 2 - Hazards Map
5. JKA Memo Regarding Density and ADU’s

MOTION

That the Planning Commission:

Adopt the attached resolution recommending to the City Council approval of Zoning Code Amendment P-2017-224-ZCA regarding accessory dwelling units.