



PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

January 7, 2016

Hon. Councilmember Mike Bonin, Council District 11, mike.bonin@lacity.org

Hon. Councilmember Paul Koretz, Council District 5, paul.koretz@lacity.org

Tom Rothmann, Senior City Planner, City Planning Department, tom.rothmann@lacity.org

Hagu Solomon-Cary, Planning Assistant, City Planning Department, hagu.solomon-cary@lacity.org

Los Angeles City Hall

200 North Spring Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Via email

Re: Council File #14-0656; CPC-2015-3484-CA; CPC-2015-4197-EAF; Baseline Mansionization/Baseline Hillside (BMO/BHO) Code Amendment; Proposed Zoning Code Amendment to Modify Single Family Zone Regulation; Council District: ALL (“Amendment”).

Dear Councilmembers Bonin and Koretz, Mr. Rothman and Ms. Solomon-Cary:

Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) is the most broad-based community organization and the voice of the Palisades since 1973. In November 2015, PPCC held a public forum to discuss the Amendment. No action was taken on this matter, however board discussion and public comment generally reflect 6 reasons that serve as the basis for PPCC’s current request¹: **The CPC Hearing on the Amendment currently expected for March 2016 should be postponed to allow for additional study, outreach, and public comment receipt/opportunity by the Department of City Planning.**

1. The City’s Process Has Been Insufficient. The Proposed BMO/BHO Code Amendment is very complex and would further restrict building on all property in Pacific Palisades zoned R1, RS, RE or RA that is located in Hillside Areas and all non-Hillside Areas outside of the Coastal Zone. Planning disclosed that it has been working on these amendments since 2014 and, in that process, has been in numerous discussions and meetings with certain residents, other neighborhood councils and property ownership groups/associations. To date, only four public hearings were scheduled (only two of which were in West Los Angeles) and then were held during the holidays when attendance would be naturally limited.
2. The City Has Not Studied Economic Impacts. Since the Amendment is aimed at limiting the size of new homes if/how will property values (small/large, old/new) in Pacific Palisades be affected? If/how will assessments and tax revenues to the County be affected?

¹ Please reference PPCC Board Meeting Minutes at: <http://www.pp90272.org/minutes2015>

3. The City Has Not Demonstrated Consensus that the Amendment is Needed. The fundamental premise of the Amendment is that there has been “a proliferation of out of scale development in single family neighborhoods” which “has demonstrated a need to update the current rules.” During PPCC meetings, there has been no agreement on this point with varied perspectives of “homeowners” and “owners/real estate developers/brokers” being voiced.²
4. The Amendment Does Not Use “Plain English” to Explain How Height is to be Measured Nor Does it Detail the Impacts to Property Owners, i.e., height and grade in Hillside Areas is “[insert: Grade] Elevation, [insert: at the perimeter of the building] of the finished or natural surface of the ground, whichever is lower, or the finished surface of the ground...”?
5. The Amendment Does Not Use “Plain English” and Appears to Dramatically Impact How the Size of New Homes is Measured, i.e., the Amendment affects calculations for basements, garages, covered porches, patios, over height ceilings, maximum residential floor area relative to lot size, bonus options, uniform reductions in hillside areas or coastal zones and changes to the maximum envelope height calculation. Each of these provisions is potentially significant and apparently misunderstood.
6. The Amendment is Unclear as to Why the Zoning Administrator’s Authority Should be Expanded to Approve Additions Made after August 1, 2010 to “Buildings” (strike: “One Family Dwelling”) under the stated conditions.

In conclusion, this just-released ordinance highlights viewpoint differences on residential development. It deserves more time, more study, more notice and full due process for and with all residents of the City of Los Angeles.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposed amendments.

Sincerely,

Christina Spitz
President
Pacific Palisades Community Council

cc (via email):

Hon. Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles City Mayor, mayor.garcetti@lacity.org

Hon. Mike Feuer, Los Angeles City Attorney, mike.feuer@lacity.org

Christine Saponara, City Planner, neighborhoodconservation@lacity.org

Sharon Dickinson, Legislative Assistant, PLUM Committee, sharon.dickinson@lacity.org

(Request for filing in CF 14-0656)

² See also: <http://www.larchmontbuzz.com/featured-stories-larchmont-village/first-community-meeting-on-revised-baseline-mansionization-ordinance-highlights-viewpoint-differences/>