

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: FEBRUARY 14, 2000

FROM: CITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED MORATORIUM ON THE CREATION OF FLAG LOTS CITYWIDE
IN SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS WITH A HILLSIDE
OVERLAY**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council following a public hearing:

1. Find the proposed project to be Statutorily Exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act, CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies; and
2. Find that the proposed moratorium is consistent with the policies of the General Plan; and
3. Approve a moratorium on the creation of flag lots citywide in single-family residential zoning districts with a hillside overlay; and
4. Direct the City Attorney to prepare and ordinance implementing these recommendations.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission considered this case at a public hearing on February 9, 2000, and voted unanimously to recommend approval of staff's recommendation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approval of this moratorium would prohibit the creation of flag lots citywide in Single-Family Residential zoning districts with a Hillside Overlay until completion of the Zoning Code revision. Initially, a moratorium was established to preserve the existing character of neighborhoods within two zone change study areas along the San Pasqual/California corridor. Subsequently, the potential impacts of flag lots on the character of existing neighborhoods citywide were raised. As a result, a moratorium on the creation of flag lots in single-family residential zoning districts in the "flat land" areas of the City was approved by the City Council on January 3, 2000. At that public hearing, in response to community concerns about exclusion of the hillside areas, the City Council directed staff to also consider applying the moratorium to these areas. This report presents the findings supporting a moratorium in the hillside areas of the City as well.

BACKGROUND

On October 13, 1999, the Subdivision Committee held a public hearing on a proposed subdivision at 1465 San Pasqual Street. As a result of the subdivision, residents raised concerns regarding the large lots in the neighborhood, the potential for future subdivisions, and the appropriateness of the area's existing zoning designation. The Subdivision Committee sent a letter to the Planning Commission requesting that a zone change study be conducted for the area.

At the November 10, 1999, meeting, the Planning Commission initiated a zone change study for two areas along the San Pasqual/California corridor. Discussions also occurred regarding the adequacy of development standards for flag lots citywide, and on the possibilities of imposing a moratorium on flag lots in Single-Family Residential districts citywide (excluding hillside overlay districts) until the completion of the Zoning Code revision.

On January 3, 2000, the City Council approved that moratorium. At that meeting, the question was raised as to whether the hillside areas would also benefit from such a moratorium, and the City Council asked staff to return with recommendations.

ANALYSIS

The proposed moratorium will prevent the creation of flag lots in the single-family residential zoning districts with a hillside overlay. The intent is to protect these areas from potential flag lot subdivision until appropriate standards are developed in the upcoming comprehensive revision of the Zoning Code.

In some instances, flag lots are an attractive option in preserving an architecturally significant or historic home. In general, however, flag lots are viewed as undesirable and disruptive to a neighborhood's character. The advantages and disadvantages of this type of subdivision, along with other flag lot issues and standards, will be studied and developed as part of the Zoning Code revision effort.

Originally, the "hillside" areas were excluded from the moratorium on flag lots because these types of subdivisions provide for flexibility in projects that, at times, are limited because of the characteristics of a hillside lot (irregular lot shape, topography, varying setbacks). Also, these areas were excluded because staff felt that the more stringent hillside standards already in place would provide adequate protection for the hillside districts.

At times, flag lots are an acceptable measure. As in the case of development in residential districts in a hillside area with curvilinear streets where no consistent neighborhood pattern exists, and where development may be hidden from street view. However, further analysis by staff has shown that there is a significant number of neighborhoods with a more conventional street design that exist in the City's hillside areas; where the potential impacts of a flag lot are just as substantial as in the "flat land" neighborhoods. Thus, warranting the same protective measures provided by the moratorium. The proposed moratorium will preserve the character and scale of Pasadena's neighborhoods, achieving the goals and objectives of the Land Use Element of the General Plan to reinforce the guidelines necessary to maintain and enhance the City's existing residential neighborhoods.

Legislation allows that moratoriums can be effective for a maximum of one year, with the possibility of an extension. Staff anticipates the revision of the Zoning Code to be complete in 14-18 months. Therefore, it is expected that the proposed moratorium will return to the City Council for an extension to allow for the additional time up to completion of the Code's revision.

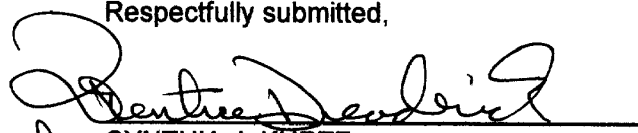
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

This project has been determined to be Statutorily Exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act, CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.


FISCAL IMPACT

Applying the moratorium on the creation of flag lots citywide in single-family residential districts with a hillside overlay will not result in an increased workload for Planning & Permitting Department staff to review projects. The proposed moratorium will prohibit certain types of projects, but due to the very low number of flag lot proposals submitted to the Planning & Permitting Department over the past few years, revenue lost from fees collected is minimal.

Respectfully submitted,



for CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

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