

# Agenda Report

**DATE:** NOVEMBER 18, 2002  
**TO:** CITY COUNCIL  
**FROM:** CITY MANAGER  
**SUBJECT:** CONSIDERATION OF A MORATORIUM ON THE DEMOLITION  
OF OLDER STRUCTURES WITHIN DESIGNATED STUDY AREAS

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council following a public hearing take the actions identified below:

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;
2. Approve a moratorium for a period of six months on the demolition of structures (20 years old or older) within the multifamily residential zones bounded by East Colorado Boulevard on the north, South Bonnie Avenue on the west, East Del Mar Boulevard on the south and South San Gabriel Boulevard on the east (Designated Study Area 1); and Alpine Street on the north, South Marengo Avenue on the west, Wallis Street on the south, and South Euclid Avenue on the east (Designated Study Area 2) as shown in Exhibit A;
3. Find that the proposed moratorium is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan;
4. Find that in accordance with the Pasadena Municipal Code (Section 2.75.220b, as amended) a) continued approval of the demolition of structures (20 years old or older) within the designated study areas would have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health, safety or welfare pursuant to the standards and policies set forth in the General Plan, b) an interim ordinance establishing the proposed moratorium is necessary to mitigate or avoid the specific, adverse impacts and c) there is no feasible alternative to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific, adverse impact identified with a less burdensome or restrictive effect, than the adoption of the proposed interim ordinance; and
5. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an Interim Ordinance implementing these recommendations.

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION**

The Cultural Heritage Commission at its meeting on Monday, November 4, 2002, adopted a motion recommending City Council approve the Demolition Moratorium with two amendments a) that the moratorium apply to the originally proposed eleven study areas, and b) that the moratorium take effect for one year. The Cultural Heritage Commission also expressed concern that a limited moratorium would simply divert demolitions to another study area and one member of the Commission argued that the moratorium should apply to the area north of Colorado Blvd. and south of Walnut Street (Study Area 5 adjacent to PCC).

Further, based on discussion at the Cultural Heritage Commission meeting regarding the prospects for demolition of two older multi-family structures located at 1240 & 1250 Marengo Avenue, respectively, immediately south of Designated Study Area 2, staff is recommending one additional study area (Study Area 12) for analysis. Study Area 12 would not be subject to the restrictions of the moratorium.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

The Planning Commission at its meeting on Wednesday, November 13, 2002, recommended City Council approve the Demolition Moratorium and associated study with one amendment requesting that staff monitor the pace of demolitions within the study areas to determine if there is a need to include and/or extend the demolition moratorium to study areas where the moratorium has not been applied. Staff intends on monitoring the demolition activity.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Approval of this moratorium would prohibit the demolition of older structures (20 years old or older) for six months within the two designated study areas (Exhibit A where a significant number of demolitions have occurred). During this time period, staff will perform a review of the impacts of the demolition of older structures and the construction of associated replacement projects on housing affordability and the neighborhood character within the two designated study areas (Exhibit A) which will be subject to the moratorium and ten additional study areas where the restrictions of the moratorium would not apply (Exhibit B).

The goal of the proposed moratorium is to limit a) the demolition of structures and b) the potential adverse impacts of the demolition/removal of structures on the existing neighborhood character of the designated study areas. During the six-month period, the demolition of older structures would be prohibited in the designated study areas, except for the implementation of replacement projects that have received a City of Pasadena discretionary approval (design review, conditional use permit, variance, etc.) prior to the effective date of the proposed moratorium.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In July, 2002, staff initiated an effort to consider whether the city would benefit from a moratorium on the demolition of older structures and associated loss of affordable housing units. The City Council and other residents had previously noted specific concerns regarding the

increased number of demolitions of older significant and/or contributing structures throughout the city as well as escalating housing costs. Staff has determined that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that existing conditions do indeed make certain areas vulnerable to a change in neighborhood character including a loss of affordable units, and that further detailed analysis of these areas is warranted. It has also been determined that the pace of change within two of these areas is such that there is a valid and compelling reason for a moratorium to curtail the demolition of older structures until further analysis can be undertaken to assess the severity of this act on the existing neighborhood character and housing affordability. During the period of the moratorium staff will perform a thorough review of the impact within the two designated study areas (Exhibit A) which will be subject to the moratorium and ten additional study areas where the restrictions of the moratorium would not apply (Exhibit B).

### ANALYSIS:

The proposed study and accompanying moratorium will seek to achieve the goals and objectives of both the Land Use and Housing Elements of the General Plan “*to preserve the character, scale, and quality of established residential neighborhood*” and “*to promote the preservation of existing affordable housing stock.*” The study will provide for staff’s review of older structures and groupings of older structures in multi-family residential districts that may be vulnerable to demolition for more intense replacement projects. The study will ascertain the severity of the impact of the demolition of older structures within the selected study areas on the existing neighborhood character and availability of affordable housing units.

In response to the concerns expressed regarding the demolition of older structures, principally those originally built as single-family residences, the following criteria were used to select the study areas:

- Clusters of older single-family residences in zoning districts which permit a higher multi-family residential density,
- A preponderance of demolition permits within the same geographic area,
- Numerous certificates of appropriateness for demolition of existing older structures within the same geographic area,
- Requests for building permits or design review which includes demolition of existing older residential structures for construction of replacement projects

Based on readily discernable data (i.e., Single-family Structures & Multi-family Density - Exhibits C; Single-family/Multifamily Demolitions & Replacement Projects – Exhibit D; Demolition Summary – Exhibit E) and limited field reconnaissance, twelve study areas were selected. Twelve study areas (Exhibit B) were selected where there exist a significant number of older single-family structures located in multi-family residential districts and/or multi-family structures vulnerable to demolition. The moratorium will be applied to the two designated study areas (Exhibit A) where a significant number of single-family structures are located in multi-family residential districts and a significant number of demolitions have occurred during the last three years.

The proposed analysis will examine the existing conditions of the study areas to ascertain the impact of recent or proposed demolitions and the achievable density/design of potential replacement projects on neighborhood character and housing affordability. A detailed assessment

of current and pending legislation that has an affect on the city's ability to impose additional restrictions shall also be undertaken. The completed study will provide the City Council with recommendations to address the concerns expressed regarding the demolition of older structures.

The proposed moratorium will prevent the demolition of structures 20 years old and older within the two designated study areas for a period of six months. The age threshold for the moratorium and associated study was determined principally by two factors a) the limited number of demolitions for buildings 20 years old or less, and b) the recent amendments to the cultural heritage ordinance to authorize review and protection of significance structures less than 50 years old. The moratorium will in the interim protect these eligible structures and limit the impact on the neighborhood character from the design/construction of new replacement projects.

**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.

**HOUSING IMPACT:**

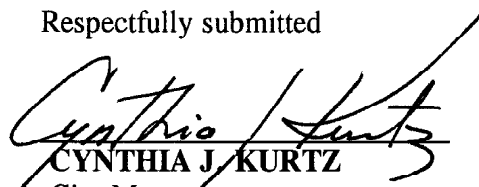
The moratorium will protect existing older structures within the designated study areas from demolition for a period of approximately six months. However, replacement projects (commercial and residential) with a discretionary approval are exempted from the moratorium and will be permitted to proceed with the demolition of structures. Additionally, the moratorium may temporarily delay construction of new housing projects that are currently undergoing planning and design review.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

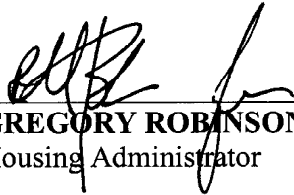
Based on a review of previous zoning studies, the majority of the associated cost is staff time. Funding for the remaining cost is available in the approved Housing Administration Account No. 8114-801-684120.

Additionally, the proposed moratorium on demolitions within the two designated study areas will limit the collection of building fees for the demolition of structures and/or the construction of associated replacement projects except for those projects with existing discretionary approvals. The city's receipt of property and/or sales taxes attributable to the implementation of associated replacement projects will also be delayed. The amount of loss or delayed revenues cannot be determined at this time.

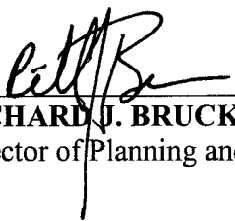
Respectfully submitted

  
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City Manager

Prepared by:

  
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Reviewed by:

  
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**Attachments**

- Exhibit A – Map of Designated Study Areas (Moratorium)
- Exhibit B – Map of Study Areas
- Exhibit C – Maps of Single-family Residences & Multifamily Residential Density
- Exhibit D – Maps of Single/Multi-family Demolitions & Replacement Projects
- Exhibit E – Demolition Summary