

# Agenda Report

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** JANUARY 3, 2000

**FROM:** CITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT: A MORATORIUM ON THE CREATION OF FLAG LOTS IN SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS CITYWIDE (EXCLUDING HILLSIDE OVERLAY DISTRICTS), AND A MORATORIUM ON SUBDIVISIONS WITHIN THE TWO STUDY AREAS ALONG THE SAN PASQUAL/CALIFORNIA CORRIDOR.**

## 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. Approve a moratorium on the creation of flag lots in single-family residential zoning districts citywide (excluding hillside overlay districts); and
3. Approve a moratorium on subdivisions within the two study areas along the San Pasqual/California corridor (Attachment 1); and
4. Find that the proposed moratoriums are consistent with the policies of the General Plan; and
5. Direct the City Attorney to prepare and ordinance implementing these recommendations.

## PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

*The planning Commission recommends approval of:*

1. A moratorium on the creation of flag lots in single-family residential districts citywide (excluding hillside overlay districts), and
2. A moratorium on subdivisions within the two study areas until the zone change study is complete.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Approval of these moratoriums would prohibit the creation of flag lots only in single-family residential districts citywide (excluding hillside overlay districts) until completion of the Zoning Code revision, and would prohibit subdivisions within the two zone change study areas along the San Pasqual/California corridor during the zone change study period. Initially, a moratorium was initiated to preserve the existing character of neighborhoods with the two zone change study areas along the San Pasqual/California corridor until the zone change study was complete. After lengthy discussion about the specifics of the study, the issue of the quality of subdivisions and flag lots citywide was raised. As a result, the proposed combination of moratorium options was chosen to best accomplish these objectives.

The goal of the proposed moratoriums are to prevent the creation of “flag-lot” subdivisions in the City until the comprehensive revision of the Zoning Code. In addition, no subdivisions will be allowed in the two zone change study areas until the study has assessed the appropriateness of the areas’ zoning designations.

## **BACKGROUND**

On October 13, 1999, the Subdivision Committee held a public hearing on a proposed subdivision for a property located at 1465 San Pasqual Street. As a result of the subdivision, residents raised concerns regarding the appropriateness of the area’s existing RS-4 (Single-family Residential, 0-4 units/acre) zoning designation in relation to the area’s predominantly large lots. In response to these concerns, the Subdivision Committee sent a letter to the Planning Commission requesting that a zone change study be conducted for the area.

On October 27, 1999, the Planning Commission held a meeting to consider conducting a zone change study for the area bound by Oakdale Street, Sierra Bonita Avenue, Arden Road, and the southern side of California Boulevard. At this meeting, information was presented indicating that an area with similar lot characteristics exists along San Pasqual Street and California Boulevard east of San Gabriel Boulevard. In addition, requests were made regarding the possibility of prohibiting the creation of any flag lots or subdivisions in the two proposed study areas during the study period. The Planning Commission continued the hearing so staff could return with an analysis of the additional information and a recommendation for the Commission’s consideration.

At the November 10, 1999, Planning Commission meeting, staff returned with a recommendation to expand the initial zone change study area (Study Area 1) to include the properties on the north-side of San Pasqual Street, one block east to Meridith Avenue. Staff’s recommendation also included an additional zone change study area east of San Gabriel Boulevard bound by San Pasqual Street, Randolph Avenue, Lombardy Road, and the eastern City Boundary (Study Area 2). The Commission discussed the possibilities of imposing a moratorium in the study areas during the study period, and citywide until the completion of the Zoning Code revision. As a result, the Commission asked staff to return with an analysis of the moratorium options discussed.

On December 8, 1999, the Planning Commission made a recommendation to the City Council as stated in the section of this report entitled, "Planning Commission Recommendation."

### **ANALYSIS**

The proposed moratorium will prevent subdivisions in the two study areas until completion of the zone change study, and will prevent the creation of "flag-lot" subdivisions citywide (excluding hillside overlay districts) until the comprehensive revision of the Zoning Code. 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 on flag lots in single-family residential districts citywide (excluding hillside overlay districts) will return to the City Council for an extension to allow for the additional time up to completion of the Code's revision.

At times, flag lots are an acceptable and necessary measure as in the case of hillside development. 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, will be studied as part of the Zoning Code revision effort. One objective of this moratorium is to prohibit the creation of flag lots until adequate standards are developed

The following alternatives were presented to the Planning Commission for discussion. A combination of alternatives 2 and 3 were chosen, and recommended for approval to the City Council:

1. *Moratorium on Subdivisions Citywide until Completion of the Zoning Code Revision*
2. *Moratorium on Flag Lots in Single-Family Residential Districts Citywide (Excluding Hillside Overlay District) Until Completion of the Zoning Code Revision*
3. *Moratorium on Subdivisions Within the Two Study Areas During the Study Period*

The proposed combination of moratorium alternatives 2 and 3 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.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

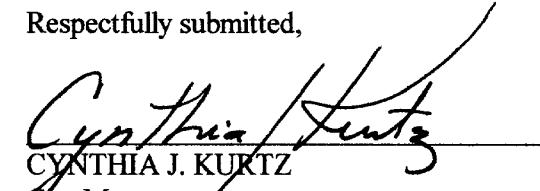
This project has been determined to be Statutorily Exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act, CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

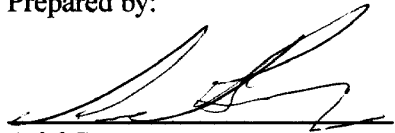
Applying the moratorium on subdivisions within the two study areas, and on the creation of flag lots in single-family residential districts citywide (excluding hillside overlay districts) will not result in an increased workload for Planning & Permitting Department staff to review projects. The proposed 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,

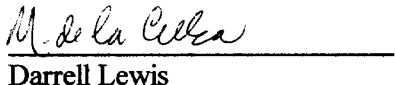
  
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Director of Planning and Permitting

**Attachments**

Map of Zone Change Study Areas and Existing Surrounding Zoning Designations

*Moratorium on Flag Lots in Single-Family Residential Districts Citywide (Excluding Hillside Overlay Districts), and a Moratorium on Subdivision Within the Two Study Areas Along the San Pasqual/California Corridor.*