

BASELINE HILLSIDE ORDINANCE SUMMARY

SMMC Attachment
04/26/2010
Agenda Item 9(a)

BACKGROUND

The Baseline Hillside Ordinance (also commonly referred to as the Hillside Mansionization Ordinance) will be the third step in preventing out-of-scale single-family development in the City of Los Angeles. The first step was the adoption of the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance (BMO) in June 2008 which provides regulations for the non-hillside areas of the City. BMO regulations focus on Floor Area Ratios (FAR) and height. The second step was the verification and necessary revisions to the Hillside Area designations to more accurately reflect the actual topography of the City's hillside regions.

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Five kick-off meetings in different areas of the City were held in early 2009 to get input on the issues related to Hillside Mansionization. The proposed regulations have been drafted in response to the principal concerns heard at these outreach meetings. In order to diminish out-of-scale development in the City's hillside neighborhoods, the regulations address *Floor Area Ratios (FAR)*, *Height*, *Stories*, and *Grading*, which are summarized below. Like the BMO, this Ordinance would also allow individual neighborhoods to adjust the baseline limits to better fit their community's character and scale through an overlay.

Floor Area Ratio

The proposed FAR (building size to lot size ratio) is based on lot size, zone, and steepness of slopes on a property. Homes would adhere to size limits computed by a formula that gradually reduces the FAR for the steeper areas of the lot. The premise is that steepness should be one of the variables used when determining the amount of development that can occur on a property. The portions of a lot that are 0% to 15% slope would be treated the same as they are in the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance. This approach takes into account that there are many differences in hillside lots, and that the Code needs to consider the varying hillside conditions when determining size limits. Residential Floor Area bonuses are also provided for, as in the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance, with additional options related to grading.

Height & Story

The current method of calculating height incentivizes large and tall box-like structures, which many communities have specifically identified as a problem. These regulations discourage terracing of structures up and down the slope which helps to visually break up the mass of buildings. The proposed regulations utilize a different method of calculating height which follows the slope of a lot (described as "envelope" height) combined with an overall height that would prevent a building from becoming too large or massive.

Grading

Currently, there are no limits to the quantities of grading which can occur on any lot. The proposed regulations recommend a new limit which utilizes a base quantity of grading plus a percentage of the lot size, with a maximum of 1,000 cubic-yards in most situations. There are also incentives in Residential Floor Area when utilizing landform grading.

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Hillside Standards Overlay

Similar to the Residential Floor Area District established by the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance, the Hillside Standards Overlay will allow individual neighborhoods to tailor the size limits as well as the other regulations covered by this Ordinance.

(For more details on these four proposals, please refer to their respective handouts.)

REMAINING DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The proposed Baseline Hillside Ordinance **would not** make policy changes to the rest of the hillside development standards. However, in order to make all single-family hillside regulations more accessible and easier to understand, some revisions to format and clarification of language will be included as part of the final draft proposal of the Ordinance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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If you would like to receive regular updates regarding this project send an email to Erick Lopez with your contact information; please include “Add me to the Hillside Interest List” in the Subject line.

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