

FACT SHEET

July 2022 Wildlife Ordinance Fact Sheet

Summary

The Department of City Planning hosted a public workshop to review the proposed revised draft Wildlife Ordinance, answer questions, and field comments. In response to the large number of questions and comments received, a new fact sheet has been prepared to respond to some of the most common questions and concerns. Additional information about the Wildlife Ordinance can be found by visiting planning4la.org/wildlife. Links to prior fact sheets have also been included below.

[Biodiversity Fact Sheet](#)

[2021 Wildlife Ordinance Fact Sheet](#)

[2022 Revised Wildlife Ordinance Fact Sheet](#)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Process, Timeline, and Outreach

1. *What additional opportunities exist for submitting comments and questions?*

Public comment will continue to be accepted throughout the review and adoption process, including through a Public Hearing (on July 13, 2022), City Planning Commission Hearing (anticipated in fall 2022) and the City Council hearing and at least one Council committee meeting. The comment period for the proposed ordinance has been extended to August 22, 2022, in response to community members requests for additional time to review and comment. Comments are still welcomed throughout the process. Please visit planning4la.org/wildlife for more information and/or email [City Planning's main email sign-up page](#) to receive updates from the Planning Department about this effort.

2. What outreach has been conducted so far (e.g. workshops, presentations)?

Research for this effort began in 2017. The first open house and workshop was held in November of 2018. City Planning held a series of public meetings, including:

- November 7, 2018 - Wildlife Pilot Study Open House & Workshop (held at American Jewish University)
- February 25, 2019 - Sustainable LA Grand Challenge Symposium, Los Angeles County: Natural and Urban Ecosystems presentation (held at UCLA)
- November 16, 2019 - Wildlife Ordinance Presentation and Workshop (held at Franklin Canyon)
- December 8, 2019 - Doheny Sunset Neighborhood Council Meeting Presentation
- October 1, 2020 - Community Forestry Advisory Council (CFAC) (Virtual)
- October 13, 2020 - California Native Plant Society (Virtual)
- September 21, 2021 - UCLA Wildlife corridors panel discussion
- June 10, 2021 - Wildlife Ordinance Workshop (Virtual)
- May/June, 2022 - various Neighborhood Council presentations in proposed District, ongoing outreach will continue through summer 2022
- June 28, 2022 - Wildlife Ordinance Informational Session (Virtual)

A draft of the Wildlife Ordinance was released to the public in April 2021 and public feedback was used to inform revisions that were incorporated into the second draft of the ordinance, which was released in April of 2022. Informational videos and FAQs have been posted online to help explain the ordinance and the modifications that have been made thus far.

A public informational session was held on June 28, 2022 and a public hearing will be held on July 13, 2022. Over 60,000 notices were mailed to property owners within and adjacent to the proposed Wildlife District in advance of the public hearing. City Planning continues to field questions, receive comments, and engage the public and stakeholders, and will continue to do so throughout the adoption process.

3. What needs to happen before the ordinance goes into effect?

For an ordinance to go into effect, it needs to be approved by the City Planning Commission, City Council's Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee, and ultimately the full City Council. Currently, the ordinance is at the staff level public hearing phase, which is scheduled for July 13, 2022. Following the staff hearing, it is anticipated that the draft ordinance would go to the City Planning Commission (CPC) in the fall of this year. The CPC may recommend approval or denial of the ordinance, they may recommend modifications to the draft ordinance, or they may ask for additional information and request to revisit the item at a future meeting. Following review by the CPC, the draft ordinance would go before the full City Council for a vote, which would determine if it becomes adopted and incorporated into the Los Angeles Municipal Code. It is anticipated that the ordinance could be considered by the City Council by the end of 2022, and if approved, properties would be subject to its regulations about mid 2023.

Relationship to other Regulations

4. How does the proposed Wildlife Ordinance interact with other existing land use regulations in the proposed Wildlife District?

Given the unique challenges associated with hillside development, there are multiple land use controls that shape development in hillside areas, including regulations contained in the base zoning, such as setbacks, lot size, lot coverage standards, as well as other supplemental use districts and specific plans such as the Baseline Hillside Ordinance (BHO), Hillside Construction Regulations (HCR), and the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan (MSPSP). The proposed Wildlife Ordinance regulations are intended to be supplemental to other existing land use regulations and offer regulation for topics that have not been sufficiently covered through other zoning mechanisms.

However, there are topics of regulation that overlap between the Wildlife Ordinance and the other land use regulations present in the project area. For example, the height of structures is regulated in some capacity by base zoning, BHO, and MSPSP, and the proposed ridgeline regulations in the Wildlife Ordinance. The Wildlife Ordinance contains a provision stating that in cases where there is direct overlap of regulations, the more restrictive regulation will apply. For regulations that are related, but not exactly the same, both regulations would apply. Where the Wildlife Ordinance does not contain regulations on a topic, existing regulations on that topic will still apply.

For example, both the HCR and the BHO contain grading standards. While HCR and BHO establish limits on the amount of grading that can occur on a site, the Wildlife Ordinance proposes to remove the exemption of certain grading activities from the by-right amount of grading allowed on a site, which would result in more discretionary review of larger projects in the hillsides. While these regulations generally apply to the topic of grading, they regulate different aspects, and therefore, would both apply together.

5. Is the Wildlife Ordinance related to other regional projects under way to better protect wildlife and the environment?

There are many other initiatives being considered by local, state, and federal governments that are related to environmental protection. From the much publicized wildlife crossings over local freeways, to the 'Rim of the Valley' project, to County efforts to protect ridgelines, there are many efforts underway to better connect and protect local wildlife and their habitats. While the Department of City Planning recognizes these regional efforts, it is important to note that these are separate from the proposed Wildlife Ordinance. As a proposed City ordinance, the Wildlife Ordinance will only be eligible for application in the City of Los Angeles. Though the Wildlife Ordinance will assist with regional connectivity of wildlife, and will be an important component of broader efforts to protect wildlife and the environment, it is not replaced by other concurrent efforts aimed at achieving similar goals.

Applicability and Project Triggers

6. *Do all of the proposed regulations apply to all properties in the Wildlife District?*

The ordinance contains two categories of regulations subject to the Wildlife Supplemental Use District: district-wide regulations and geography-based regulations. District-wide regulations apply to all properties in Wildlife Districts, while geography-based regulations apply to properties where Ridgelines and/or Wildlife Resource Buffers are present.

Wildlife Ordinance regulations would only apply to development activities that meet the definition of a Project. The following activities count as Projects:

- New construction
- Grading exceeding 500 cubic yards
- Major Remodel Hillside (*Any remodeling of a main building on a lot in the Hillside Area whenever the aggregate value of all alterations within a one-year period exceeds 50 percent of the replacement cost of the main building.*)
- Additions of at least 500 sq ft
- Protected or Significant Tree removal
- Any tree removal in the public right of way
- Any development activity requiring a permit and located on a lot in which a Wildlife Resource buffer is present

Only the new development activity would be subject to the proposed regulations. Examples of how this would apply:

- If a homeowner proposes a tree removal only, the tree requirements would need to be met. Structures or fences would not be made to conform to the new rules.
- If a homeowner builds an addition over 500 square feet, the **new addition** would need to comply with the new rules.
- Grading exceeding 500 cubic yards would require development within the graded area to comply with the new rules.

If a property owner undertakes a project that does not meet one of the project criteria described above, that activity would not be subject to the Wildlife Ordinance regulations.

7. *Will existing homes have to comply with the Wildlife Ordinance?*

In general, existing developed properties do not need to comply with the new regulations unless they are undertaking substantial remodeling. Small remodels, such as adding a room or addition that is less than 500 square feet, will not be subject to new regulations unless those properties are located on lots containing Wildlife Resource Buffers. Interior remodeling and construction activity that does not alter or expand a building or structure's footprint will not count as a Project,

i.e. kitchen renovation, reroof, pool renovation.

Additionally, the proposed ordinance is intended to only apply to the portion of the property that is affected by new construction activity, and does not apply retroactively, or to existing portions of properties that are not being modified. Some examples:

- If a homeowner does not have plans to make any changes to their home or structures on their property, there is no requirement to comply with the new rules.
- If a homeowner is doing interior renovations or remodeling to their existing structure, they would not need to comply with the new rules.
- Replacement of existing windows does not require compliance with the new rules.

Non-Conformance and Ability to Rebuild Following Natural Disasters

8. *Will I be able to rebuild my home if it is damaged or destroyed in a natural disaster?*

Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 12.23 describes the current citywide regulations for Non-Conforming Building and Uses, as well as the repair, rebuilding, or remodeling of a building following damage or destruction in a natural disaster such as a fire, flood, or earthquake. This section, which is administered and implemented by the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS), is not proposed to be changed in any way by the proposed Wildlife Ordinance. Section 12.23 states that if the value of repairs or restoration are under 75% of the total valuation of the home, owners may rebuild the structure, as long as permits for restoration have been obtained within two years of the date of damage. Typically many homes subject to the rebuilding provisions are within this category.

However if the value of repairs exceed 75% of the total valuation of the home, structures may still be rebuilt, though the following conditions must be met.

- The building is not constructed where a public street exists or is planned; and
- The building does not exceed the current allowable height of the zone in which it is located; and
- Each side yard is no less than one-half the required side yard for new buildings in the zone in which it is located, but in no event less than three feet; and
- The front and rear yards are at least one-half the required front and rear yards for new buildings in the zone in which it is located.

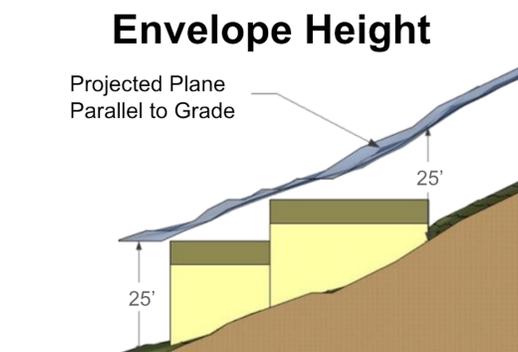
While the Wildlife Ordinance does not change the rebuilding rules the regulations contained in the Wildlife Ordinance may still affect a small number of properties' ability to rebuild to the exact specifications of the original design. However, properties would not be precluded from rebuilding on their site. In most cases, homes could still be enlarged, but might have to adjust by providing one slightly larger setback, for instance, 5 feet versus 3 feet. For ridgeline properties the proposed regulations would allow up to two stories at the top of a ridgeline and three stories along a slope. Even on properties where these conditions would factor in, the ability to rebuild is still maintained, though minor deviation from the original design may be required. Since the

proposed Wildlife Ordinance regulations are designed to allow flexibility, it is unlikely the proposed regulations, nor those contained in Section 12.23, would entirely prevent rebuilding following a disaster.

Ridgelines

9. *What are the height regulations for Ridgeline properties?*

The Wildlife Ordinance proposes two regulations to limit the height of buildings on properties where ridgelines are present. The first regulation is a limit on the maximum envelope height for structures. Envelope height is a concept used today in the Baseline Hillside Ordinance (BHO), which measures vertical distance from the grade of the site to an imaginary plane at the roof structure or parapet wall located directly above and parallel to the grade. Please see the diagram below for a demonstration of this concept.



The Baseline Hillside Ordinance establishes maximum envelope heights ranging from 18 feet to 33 feet, depending on the zone and height district designations of the property. BHO also takes roof forms into consideration when determining allowable envelope heights, with structures with sloped roofs receiving slightly greater envelope height maximums than structures with flat roofs. The Wildlife Ordinance proposes a new maximum envelope height of 25 feet for all structures located within 50 ft of an identified ridgeline, regardless of the zone, height district, or the shape of the roof. It does not propose any restrictions to height related to roof types. A structure with a sloped roof in an R1 zone with a Height District 1 designation today has a maximum envelope height of 33 feet. Within identified ridgelines, this would be reduced to 25 feet under the proposed Wildlife Ordinance regulations- a difference of 8 feet. A flat-roofed structure with the same zone and height designations has a maximum envelope height of 28 feet today, meaning the proposed Wildlife Ordinance regulations would only limit envelope height by 3 feet compared to what is currently allowed.

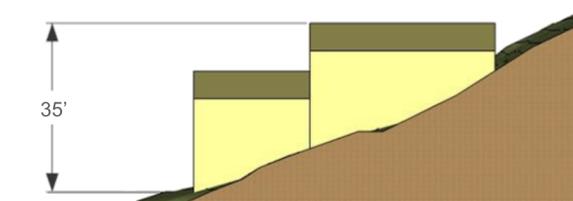
The envelope height limits proposed for ridgeline properties in the Wildlife Ordinance serve to ensure that new development has a lower profile and is less impactful than development permitted today, while still allowing for flexibility in design. The envelope height restriction still allows for two-story structures to be built at the top of ridgelines, which is consistent with the

majority of the existing development pattern. It also allows for a second story addition to be added to an existing one-story structure. Commenters on the former draft Ridgeline Ordinance specifically requested this allowance, and the modification was incorporated in the revised draft Wildlife Ordinance. The ordinance does not propose any changes to roof slope, shape or design, and does not dictate architectural design.

The other height regulation proposed for ridgeline properties in the Wildlife Ordinance is an overall height maximum of 35 feet, which is measured from the lowest elevation point within 5 horizontal feet of the exterior walls of a building or structure, to the highest elevation point of the roof structure or parapet wall, as demonstrated in the diagram below. While the envelope height restriction ensures no portion of a building or structure exceeds 25 feet, the overall height regulation helps to limit the total impact of new development on ridgelines by limiting the ability for buildings to cascade down the slopes of ridgelines.

Overall Height

Highest and Lowest
Elevation of Structures



By establishing limits on both envelope height and overall height, the Wildlife Ordinance regulations will result in new development that is less disruptive to wildlife movement and ridgeline ecosystems, and more in-line with past development patterns of hillside neighborhoods that have been built out for many years.

Fencing

10. Is privacy and security fencing allowed in the Wildlife District?

The proposed regulations do not prohibit secure fencing. New fencing within required setbacks are required to meet the Wildlife-Friendly fence and wall standards. All other fencing on a site is not required to conform to the wildlife friendly fencing standards, meaning that pools, backyards, and patios can still be secured for privacy and safety. The fencing regulations have been developed to provide options to locate solid fencing for privacy and security within any interior portion of the property, while offering the option for a property to leave a rear yard setback or one side yard setback open or wildlife friendly fenced so that a small portion of the property can facilitate the movement of a variety of different animal species. Certain materials, such as barbed wire, razor wire and spikes, are prohibited in order to ensure that wildlife moving

across fences would not be injured. As with the other proposed regulations, no regulations are retro-active so that existing structures and fences are not affected by new regulations.

Landscaping and Fire

11. How do the proposed regulations relate to existing brush management requirements/Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones?

The Wildlife Ordinance is consistent with brush management protocol that has been put in place by State, County and municipal fire agencies/departments, which aims to regulate the size and location of vegetation. Vegetation and landscaping standards included in the Wildlife Ordinance are developed to be specifically aligned with LA County and LA City Fire Department's Brush Clearance Zones (A, B, and C). The Wildlife Ordinance proposes regulations on the *type* of vegetation to incorporate into new landscaping, and does not provide additional restrictions on how to maintain vegetation within landscaped areas around structures. Any newly planted or landscaped area within a Wildlife District would be required to comply with these Planting Zones in order to increase habitat value and resist the spread of fire. In the draft Wildlife Ordinance, Planting Zone A requires a minimum of 50% native species, chosen from among the species listed in the Preferred Plant List. Zone B requires a minimum of 75% native species, chosen from among the species listed in the Preferred Plant List.

Additionally, the setbacks and fencing requirements being proposed in the Ordinance provide better access for firefighters to access properties. The draft Wildlife Ordinance supports the goals of fire safety and native vegetation/habitat enhancement, creating regulations that allow for both. Examples include the prohibition of invasive plant species, which increase fuel load and fire risk, and increased limits on construction activity on steep hillside slopes, which are more fire prone.