LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING

Informational Handout

Hillsides in the Southeast Valley

Hillside areas represent a major portion (approximately 51%) of the Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan. All of the hillside area is located south of Ventura Boulevard, east and west of Cahuenga Boulevard, and northwest of Barham Boulevard. The hillside areas are located in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ), where existing substandard streets can pose emergency access challenges for response personnel. In light of these conditions, the Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan seeks to direct anticipated growth away from hillside areas, limit grading, and preserve existing open space to support ecological resources and wildlife conservation.

Zoning Strategies for Hillside Areas

Existing Overlays & Regulations

The Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan[1] includes regulations for land uses, grading, height, setbacks, fences, gates, lighting, and landscaping. It also includes environmental protection measures for prominent ridges, streams, land around parklands, protected trees, archaeological and paleontological resources, in addition to right-of-way regulations that are intended to preserve hillside views, minimize development impacts, and protect ecological, cultural and historic resources. The Specific Plan will remain as it exists today, while Baseline Hillside Ordinance (BHO) regulations will be integrated into the base zoning as part of the update to the Community Plan.

[1] Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan, Los Angeles City Planning, https://planning.lacity.gov/mulholland-scenic-parkway-specific-plan.

More Designated Open Space

The Community Plan Update seeks to support urban habitats and opportunities for recreation by redesignating existing undeveloped land owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority to the Open Space land use designation. These lots are currently designated for residential uses. This change is intended to protect natural features and wildlife habitats, while reducing the risk of fire and other hazards.

Proposed Open Space Resource Standards

The Southeast Valley Community Plans Update (SEV CPU) proposes to bring in additional protections for Open Space parcels in the hillside area. These protections would apply to new construction and major remodel projects on parcels within 25 feet from designated Open Space, and would include:

- **Prohibiting certain fence standards**- that go beyond current fence standard limitations to include prohibiting (hostile) fence materials such as barbed wire, plastic mesh, concertina wire, razor wire, spikes, sharp glass, and uncapped hollow fence posts.
- **Adding lighting standards**- to minimize light impacts close to the Open Space areas. These standards would include limiting heights of mounted outside light fixtures to no more than 20 feet above ground level, limiting free standing light structures to no more than two feet above the ground level, and limiting output for most outdoor lighting to 800 lumens and 2600 lumens for security and recreation lighting.
- **Requiring new windows 40 square feet and larger to be bird safe**- through treatments and installations such as angled glass, fritted glass and other glass treatments such as UV reflective glare patterns, frosting, stenciling, etching, or sand blasting, or other architectural features.

In addition, for parcels near United States Geological Survey stream sites or other mapped water resources, the Zoning Information Map Access System (ZIMAS) website [2] will have an informational document that will provide guidance for sites to facilitate

[2] ZIMAS: https://zimas.lacity.org/

interaction with state agencies whose role is to monitor and maintain streams and waterways. The goal is to prevent disruption or environmental impacts to water resources during ground-disturbing and construction operations. Specific protections and replacement requirements also apply to all species designated as protected trees or shrubs in the City, including oak trees, Southern California black walnut trees, western sycamore trees, California bay trees, Mexican elderberry shrubs, and toyon shrubs.[3]

Red Flag Streets

Established in 2006, the City of Los Angeles' Red Flag Parking Restrictions Program designates key intersections, sharp curves, hairpin turns, and narrow roadways where parked vehicles could obstruct emergency access. Parking along these designated routes is prohibited on Red Flag Days, which are declared when severe weather creates an extremely high risk of rapid brush fires. To ensure emergency vehicles can navigate effectively during these critical conditions, more than 1,700 signs have been posted throughout the city to identify affected zones and streets.

Parking Requirements on Red Flag Streets

Today the Baseline Hillside Ordinance (BHO) requires that lots located on Substandard Hillside streets provide additional parking onsite, above the two parking spaces required, when the Residential Floor Area exceeds 2,400 square feet. One additional parking space needs to be provided for each additional increment of 1,000 square feet or fraction thereof of floor area up to a maximum of five onsite parking spaces. This requirement is being extended to Red Flag streets in order to promote safety during times of emergency and for general vehicular circulation.

Parking Requirements - Covered Parking

The BHO currently requires at least two of the off-street required parking spaces to be covered within a private garage. However, as proposed, the floor area exemption for garages will continue to be allowed, but required parking would no longer need to be

[3] Chapter 1A of LAMC Sec. 4C.6.1 (Protected Vegetation): https://zoning.lacity.gov/browse/4#4C.6.1.

covered. This would help minimize grading and also allow for greater flexibility to place parking onsite, contributing to safety in the hillsides by allowing parking to be more easily accommodated off the street and on the lot.

Standardized Setbacks

The BHO allows a variety of options for front yard setbacks. Front Yard Setbacks are proposed to be standardized, requiring a 10-foot, 15-foot, or 25-foot minimum front yard setback based on the zone and the minimum size of the lot, with exception for slopes that exceed 60%.

Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones

Hillsides in the Sherman Oaks - Studio City - Toluca Lake - Cahuenga Pass Community Plan are designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ), which are areas that must comply with brush clearance requirements of the Fire Code. To minimize the impacts of wildfires, density increases are being directed away from the hillside and density is proposed to be limited in designated areas.