

AGENDA NO. 5



PLANNING COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

DATE: February 22, 2010

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Development Services Department/ Planning Division

SUBJECT: **CONSIDERATION OF A PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC WORKSHOP SERIES TO ADDRESS RECENT CHANGES TO MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT STANDARDS FOR CERTAIN COASTAL ZONE PROPERTIES**

RECOMMENDATION

In response to concerns expressed by the Planning Commission at its January 25, 2010 public hearing regarding changes to Coastal Zone maximum building height standards occasioned by the reapplication of the 1986 Zoning Ordinance to certain Coastal Zone properties, staff recommends that the Planning Commission schedule a series of public workshops to gather community input on this issue.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

On May 11, 2009, upon determining that the 1992 Zoning Ordinance was not certified by the California Coastal Commission (CCC), the City formally reapplied the CCC-certified 1986 Zoning Ordinance to those properties within the Coastal Zone that lie outside the Downtown Redevelopment Area (which is governed by the Downtown Zoning Ordinance). Prior to this reapplication of the 1986 Zoning Ordinance, Coastal Zone properties outside of the Downtown Redevelopment Area had been subject to the standards of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance since October 1992.

The 1992 Zoning Ordinance continues to apply to all properties situated outside of both the Coastal Zone and the Downtown Redevelopment Area.

While establishing 36 feet as the maximum building height for residential development citywide, the 1992 Zoning Ordinance includes a provision which limits building height to 27 feet and two stories for residential development in two areas: a) the Townsite Neighborhood Area southerly of the Downtown Redevelopment Area; and b) the entire South Oceanside Neighborhood Area. As illustrated on the map included as Exhibit A to this staff report, portions of both of these areas fall within the Coastal Zone.

The following table illustrates maximum building heights for residential development set forth in the 1986 Zoning Ordinance:

TABLE 1
1986 Zoning Ordinance
Maximum Building Heights & Story Limits in Residential Zones

Residential Zone	Max. Height	Max. Number of Stories
R-A; R-1; R-2	35 feet	2
R-3; R-T; R-C	35 feet	3

In those portions of the Coastal Zone located outside of the Downtown Redevelopment Area (i.e., those now subject to the 1986 Zoning Ordinance), there are properties that bear the R-1, R-3 and R-T zoning designations. The R-1 properties are located along South Pacific Street south of Buccaneer Beach and in the neighborhood south of Vista Way and east of Coast Highway. The R-3 properties are located east of the railroad on Tremont Street, Cleveland Street and Broadway and west of the railroad along one block of South Pacific Street and four blocks of South Myers Street. The R-T properties are located on the collection of streets located west of the railroad, south of Wisconsin Avenue and north of Buccaneer Beach.

Unlike the 1992 Zoning Ordinance, the 1986 Zoning Ordinance does not include a provision which further restricts building height and story limits for Coastal Zone properties located outside of the Downtown Redevelopment Area. Consequently, properties that are again subject to the 1986 Zoning Ordinance now have a maximum building height allowance eight feet greater than what was previously allowed under the 1992 Zoning Ordinance. Furthermore, R-3 and R-T properties previously restricted to two stories are again allowed a maximum of three stories.

Since the reapplication of the 1986 Zoning Ordinance to the above-specified Coastal Zone properties, the Planning Commission has reviewed and approved three projects which exceed the previously-applicable height standard of 27 feet. All three of these projects involved additions to existing single-family residences on the west side of South Pacific Street. At present, there are no pending applications for residential development that would exceed the building height or story limitations of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance.

ANALYSIS

DISCUSSION

The last time the community was formally engaged on the question of maximum building height on the above-specified Coastal Zone properties was in 1988, when public workshops were held as part of the comprehensive updating of the 1986 Zoning Ordinance. The community input gathered at that time precipitated the provision in the 1992 Zoning Ordinance which limits building height on these properties to 27 feet and two stories.

Preliminary field assessments of the built environment within the areas now subject to the 1986 Zoning Ordinance reveal that most existing development conforms to the 27-foot and two-story limitations of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance, with some taller three-story development found in the R-T zone along South Pacific Street.

The City's Local Coastal Program (LCP) includes design guidelines that call for new development in the Coastal Zone to "recognize the positive attributes of the existing neighborhood and seek to enhance the established living environment." To these ends, the LCP design guidelines encourage new development to meet a variety of criteria, including:

- Compatibility of height, scale, color and form with the surrounding neighborhood;
- Harmony in the visual relationship and transition between new and older buildings;
- High quality design;
- Distinctive landscaping;
- Enhancement of existing public views.

These criteria, along with General Plan policies that speak to community values and site design, provide the policy framework in which to consider the implications of the increase in maximum allowable building height brought about by the reapplication of the 1986 Zoning Ordinance. Should the Planning Commission choose to initiate a series of public workshops on this issue, staff will outline these relevant policies in further detail and furnish whatever additional information and analysis the Planning Commission and members of the public deem crucial to the decision-making process.

SUMMARY

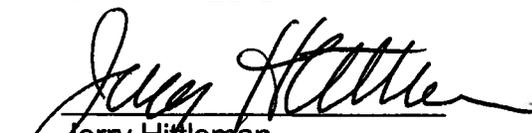
Staff recommends that the Planning Commission schedule a series of public workshops to gather community input on recent changes to maximum building height standards for residential development in those portions of the Coastal Zone where maximum building height standards have changed as a result of the reapplication of the 1986 Zoning Ordinance.

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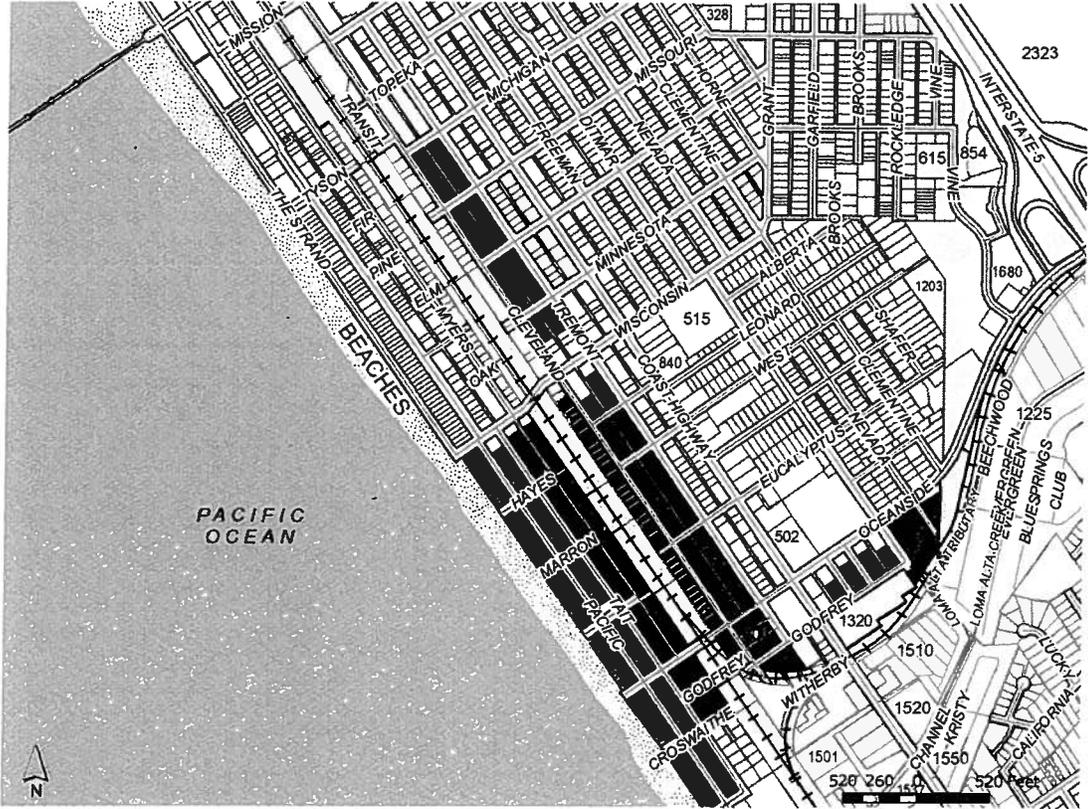

Jerry Hittleman
City Planner

Attachments:

1. Exhibit "A" - Map of Residential Coastal Zone Properties Subject to the 1986 Z.O.

Exhibit A: Map of Residential Coastal Zone Properties Subject to the 1986 Zoning Ordinance

Northern Segment



Southern Segment

