



## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 17-0189, **Version:** 2

---

Recommendation to declare ordinance amending the Long Beach Municipal Code by amending Table 31-2A, residential development standards, and by adding Section 21.31.255.F, relating to development and design standards applicable to properties in the R-1-L zoning district, read and adopted as read. (District 8)

On February 16, 2017, the Planning Commission held a hearing on proposed Zoning Text Amendments related to development and design standards applicable to properties in the Los Cerritos - Virginia Country Club neighborhood, home of the R-1-L zoning district, and recommended unanimously that the City Council approve the proposed amendments and accept Categorical Exemption No. CE-16-340. The proposed amendments were drafted during the year-and-a-half-long development moratorium that is currently in effect for the R-1-L zoning district, the City's single-family residential zoning district for large lots found exclusively in the Los Cerritos - Virginia Country Club neighborhood.

In September 2015, the City Council adopted emergency Ordinance ORD-15-0024 (moratorium) temporarily limiting certain construction and development activities in the R-1-L zoning district. The moratorium was adopted to allow Planning Bureau staff and the Planning Commission time to study potential amendments to the Zoning Regulations in response to concerns voiced by neighborhood residents about the ability of the current R-1-L development standards to maintain the neighborhood's existing development character. The moratorium, originally set to expire on September 1, 2016, but extended to March 31, 2017, by the City Council with the adoption of Ordinance ORD-16-0018, limited new residential structures and residential additions to 1,500 square feet, a threshold chosen to allow for minor development projects, but not those which might have created adverse impacts that could potentially be inconsistent with zoning code revisions being considered during the moratorium period.

City Council direction to staff during the moratorium was to work with neighborhood residents, review the development standards, and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council on possible revisions to the existing R-1-L zone development standards.

Following adoption of the moratorium, Planning staff held a series of meetings with members of the Committee for Preservation of the Los Cerritos Neighborhood (CPLCN) community group. Staff received feedback from the community group on the types of projects that were seen to be eroding neighborhood character and a set of amendment recommendations that the group felt would safeguard the neighborhood from negatively impactful future developments. The recommendations were wide-ranging, and included a cap on home

sizes, a lowering of the allowable floor area ratio, increased front and side setbacks, increases in required parking based on bedroom count, as well as parking restrictions on construction personnel and a maximum construction timeline. Staff used these recommendations as a basis for understanding the neighborhood's development issues and a starting point for analysis of the built character of the community.

During Fall 2016, the City hosted two publicly-noticed community meetings at the Expo Arts Center, located just outside the neighborhood. The first meeting, held in September, functioned as a listening session that allowed staff to collect feedback from the greater community on what made the neighborhood special and distinct from other neighborhoods, as well as feedback on the topics of concern expressed to staff by the CPLCN group during the series of small group meetings held earlier in the year. At the second community meeting, which was held in November, staff presented a set of amendment recommendations that addressed the consensus of ideas that were heard, such as the importance of the neighborhood's open and airy feel, the importance of developments properly scaled to their lot size, and the negative impacts that building massing can have on streetscapes and neighboring properties. Staff's amendments were crafted to represent the broad interests of the community at large, recognize the purpose of the R-1-L zone as a district of large lots and estate-like homes, balance community concerns with the property rights and development expectations of property owners, and work within the framework of the Zoning Code structure. Staff's amendments were then presented to the Planning Commission at a December 1, 2016 study session.

On February 2, 2017, the Planning Commission held a public hearing, received public testimony, and continued staff's Zoning Text Amendment request. Prior to voting for the continuance, the Planning Commission directed staff to collect additional feedback from the community and prepare an additional recommendation on the concept of an R-1-L zone single-family home size threshold that would trigger additional design standards and/or discretionary review.

During the week of February 6, 2017, staff held two small group meetings with Los Cerritos residents. One group of residents was opposed to the idea of a home size threshold, as well as any additional development restrictions for single-family homes, including the R-1-L amendments recommended by staff. The group argued that the existing standards have served the community well, and that further restrictions would negatively impact property values and limit the range of potential home styles. The second group, comprised of members of the CPLCN, recommended that all homes in the R-1-L zone over 7,500 square feet be subject to a publicly-noticed hearing at the Zoning Administrator level, and that any approval include requirements for additional setbacks and additional on-site parking, as well as a requirement that the development not interfere with any existing solar installations, to mitigate potential impacts to neighborhood character.

On February 16, 2017, staff presented the Planning Commission with Zoning Text Amendments to Table 31-2A, Residential Development Standards, and Section 21.31.255 -

Design, Treatment, and Finish, relating to development and design standards applicable to properties in the R-1-L zoning district (Exhibit A - Proposed Zoning Text Amendments). Staff also recommended the Planning Commission not set a maximum home size threshold in the R-1-L zone or require a public hearing process for a code-compliant, single-family development, regardless of development size, reasoning that no zoning district in the City currently has a maximum home size standard, and no zoning district in the City has a mandatory public hearing process for a code-compliant, single-family development. The Planning Commission recommended unanimously that the City Council approve the amendments, as proposed by staff. The proposed amendments, in redline strikethrough format, are provided in Exhibit B (Exhibit B - Redline Strikethrough Proposed Changes).

The Long Beach Municipal Code does not set forth required findings for approval of a Zoning Text Amendment. However, the proposed amendments relating to the development and design standards of the R-1-L zoning district are consistent with the General Plan, specifically Land Use Element neighborhood policies that call for “protecting the integrity and quality” of homes in the Los Cerritos neighborhood, and preservation of Los Cerritos neighborhood character through “scale, materials, and architectural detailing.”

Public hearing notices were distributed on March 7, 2017, and no responses were received as of the date of preparation of this report.

In accordance with the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a Categorical Exemption No. CE-16-340 was issued for the proposed project (Exhibit C).

This matter was reviewed by Assistant City Attorney Michael J. Mais on March 1, 2017 and by Budget Management Officer Rhutu Amin Gharib on March 3, 2017.

City Council action is requested on March 21, 2017, in advance of moratorium expiration on March 31, 2017. Furthermore, Section 21.25.103.A.1 of the Zoning Regulations requires a hearing on this item by the City Council within 60 days of the Planning Commission hearing, which took place on February 16, 2017.

There is no direct fiscal or local ongoing job impact associated with this recommendation.

Approve recommendation.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LONG BEACH AMENDING THE LONG BEACH MUNICIPAL CODE BY AMENDING TABLE 31-2A, RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, AND BY ADDING SECTION 21.31.255.F, RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO PROPERTIES IN THE R-1-L ZONING DISTRICT

AMY J. BODEK, AICP

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST  
CITY MANAGER