



CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE
300 Forest Avenue, Pacific Grove, California 93950

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Mark Brodeur, Community and Economic Development Director

MEETING DATE: October 27, 2016

SUBJECT: Modify Site Coverage Percentage in Downtown Commercial (C-D).

CEQA STATUS A Negative Declaration will need to be completed and approved before the Commission can take action.

RECOMMENDATION

Offer staff a conceptual recommendation. Suggested actions are articulated for discussion purposes only. Is staff heading in the right direction?

Increase maximum site coverage requirement in the downtown commercial district from 75% to 100% for any building height.

DISCUSSION

Our need for housing in Pacific Grove is approaching crisis proportions. Our vacancy rate for rental housing is under 1 percent. The median house price is unaffordable for most working families. Our homeless population is slowly growing and will soon be impacting residents and local businesses.

We need housing for everyone — from emergency homeless shelters to housing for our local workforce, including teachers, nurses and safety personnel. We know how to do this, but it takes political will and leadership to follow through.

The most fertile ground for increasing housing opportunities in the City of Pacific Grove is to look to our downtown. Our current zoning in the downtown permits mixed use development at a fairly high density. One of the primary roadblocks to increasing the number of development proposals in the downtown is a current regulation that allows only 75% of the parcel to be covered with impervious surface (buildings/paving).

The Table found in 23.31.040 stipulates that the maximum building height in the downtown may be 40 (forty) feet if the site coverage does not exceed 75%. The issue with this development standard is that it does not reflect the existing historic building pattern of the downtown. In fact, the 75% site coverage reflects more of a suburban building character. A review of the building patterns viewed in an aerial photo of the downtown reveals that most existing buildings that are over 40 feet high cover 100% of the parcel that they sit on. This existing 100% site coverage metric is important to maintain in order to reflect the urban nature of our downtown. The conclusion is that the current built-out nature of the downtown is satisfactory and does not require drastic site coverage requirements that completely out of context with the existing development pattern.

A modification to the Zoning Code should be focused on preserving the tightly knit character of the downtown while enhancing its efficiency, economic vitality and appearance.

The current site coverage requirement (in downtown) contained in the Zoning Code discourages new development of mixed use projects in the downtown because of the burden of having to provide a considerable percentage of the site in open space. This open space requirement, while sounding admirable is completely at odds with the historic building pattern in the downtown and should be revised to more accurately reflect the existing pattern of development.

Table 23.31.040 Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts Development Standards (Continued)

	C-1/C-1-T	C-D	C-FH ¹	C-2	C-V	I
Building Form Requirements						
Building height (max.) ³	40' with max. site coverage of 75%; 30' with max. site coverage of 90%	40' with max. site coverage of 75%; 30' with max. site coverage of 90%	35'	40'	40' with max. site coverage of 75%; 30' with max. site coverage of 90%	40'
Site coverage (max.) ⁴	75 – 90%, depending on building height	100% 75 – 90%, depending on building height	75%	90%	75 – 90%, depending on building height	90%

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The General Plan Land Use Element includes these policy statements for the Downtown. While none of these specifically cite lot coverage. I believe this amendment could be found consistent with them as they seek to amend current zoning to match the existing character of Downtown.

POLICY 22 Review and revise height and story limits to maintain compatibility of new and remodeled buildings with the existing character of Downtown.

POLICY 23 Encourage new residential uses in the Downtown, but limited to the upper stories of new and existing buildings. The City will consider providing a third-story floor area bonus for upper-story restaurant and /or residential use.

Program S Consider establishing separate building standards for Downtown parcels fronting

on Lighthouse Avenue and for parcels
fronting on side streets.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

At its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday October 13th, the Economic Development Commission endorsed the zoning amendment proposal.

CEQA

Depending on the Planning Commission direction, a Negative Declaration will be prepared and completed prior to bringing this item back to the Commission for recommended action.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Brodeur". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "M".

Mark Brodeur
Community and Economic Development Director