



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

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Chairman Fredrickson and Planning Commission Members

FROM: Mark Brodeur, Director

MEETING DATE: February 2, 2017

SUBJECT: Oversized homes in Single Family Residential Districts

CEQA: Categorically Exempt (Class 5 – Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations)

RECOMMENDATION

1. Create a special overlay district or other zoning text modification to adopt a maximum gross floor area of 4,700 square feet for the size of a single family home on Ocean View Boulevard (from Second Street to Asilomar Boulevard where two or more adjacent lots have been merged).
2. The maximum gross floor area of the second floor of the home shall not exceed 75% of the total gross floor area of the first floor.

BACKGROUND

In recent months, the Planning Commission has reviewed large single family home developments along Ocean View Boulevard located in the in the R-1 District. These new homes appear to be out of scale with the surrounding residences along Ocean View. The primary reason for this is that property owners have been buying adjacent lots to increase the maximum size of their homes. When that simple lot merge is completed, the allowed gross floor area of the home can significantly increase creating a massing disparity over the neighboring homes (on single lots) in the area.

The Planning Commission discussed this phenomenon in Fall of 2016 and generally felt that the Zoning Code {“Table 23.16.050 – Allowed gross floor area”} generally does a good job at matching homes to parcel size but didn’t go far enough. Initially, the Commission suggested that lot mergers should be curtailed or that the Table needed to be changed. However, after fully discussing the situation, the Planning Commission simply felt that the Table was adequate and that a maximum home size along Ocean View Boulevard should be implemented when lots are merged.

The preferred zoning method to add a specific or special requirement for homes on a single street included in a broader zoning district is to apply an “architectural overlay” or special exception for future single family development along Ocean View Boulevard

Based on analysis provided by the Community Development Department and Commissioner Bluhm, lot sizes in the Beach Tract R-1 District were analyzed and

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compared. In the final analysis, the Commission isn't opposed to lot consolidations; it is opposed to the resulting home size that is out of character with the neighborhood.

The analysis of home sizes in the R-1 District revealed that the two largest homes on Ocean View Boulevard (in the Beach Tract) were;

- 1223 Ocean View Boulevard = 4,412 sq. ft.
- 1205 Ocean View Boulevard = 4,343 sq. ft.

DISCUSSION

The most direct path of mitigating the proliferation of oversized homes is to simply limit a maximum home size of 4,700 square feet whenever two or more adjacent lots or combined. This method puts a cap on the maximum size of homes along Ocean View Boulevard to maintain neighborhood character for this special view corridor along one of Pacific Grove's most scenic roadways.

On a related note, the Planning Commission was looking for another way to further articulate the upper floors of large homes along Ocean View so as to offset the bulk and massing of new homes or large, bulky additions. The Planning Commission considered and discussed several options that were proposed by Community Development staff.

The recommended zoning tool for reducing apparent bulk and mass is to limit the gross floor area of the second floor to 75% of the total gross area of the first floor. This reduces the upper floor bulk yet allows the project architect to find creative ways to mold the shape of the second floor to the clients desires. The Planning Commission is aware that some architectural styles (e.g. colonial) do not include reducing upper floor size and would resort to other methods to reduce apparent bulk and massing on those. This modification would be implemented by adding a new Zoning Code subchapter "23.16.042 - Allowed second floor gross floor area."

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

The proposed action is Categorically Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Guidelines Section 15305 (Class 5 – Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations). No changes in density would occur since one single-family home would continue to be allowed on parcels in the R-1 district. There are no other aspects of the proposed amendment that would result in potentially significant environmental impacts.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

Mark J. Brodeur, Director
Community and Economic Development