

Ordinance to Allow Murals on Single-Family Residences in

Council District 15

Categorical Exemption Narrative

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed ordinance modifies Section 22.119 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code to allow Original Art Murals on lots in Council District 15 that are developed with only one single-family residential structure.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Mural Ordinance (Los Angeles Ordinance No. 182706, adopted on August 19, 2013) established a citywide program for permitting new and existing murals on a content-neutral basis in Los Angeles with certain terms and conditions. One of the conditions bans the creation of new murals on single family homes citywide.

Concurrently with adopting the Mural Ordinance, the City Council adopted Motion 7-F, which instructed the Planning Department with the assistance of the City Attorney and the Department of Cultural Affairs to report in 30 days with an ordinance to establish a pilot program in Council Districts 1 and 14 which implements the proposals contained in the ordinance identified as Alternative A, specifically allowing murals on single-family residences. At the October 9, 2013 joint meeting of the Arts, Parks, Health, Aging and River Committee and the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, Councilman Price requested that Council District 9 also be included in that draft ordinance.

That draft ordinance was adopted by the City Council on December 10, 2013 (Los Angeles Ordinance No. 182825). That draft ordinance amended Administrative Code Section 22.119, subsection (d), subdivision (7) to allow a mural to be placed on a lot improved with only one single-family structure and accessory structures that is located in Council Districts 1, 9 or 14. The City Council found that the 2013 ordinance was categorically exempt under a Class 1 categorical exemption (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301).

Council District 15 is interested in similarly amending the Administrative Code to allow murals on single-family homes in its district. Thus, the proposed ordinance would modify Section 22.119 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code to allow Original Art Murals on lots in Council District 15 that are developed with only one single-family residential structures.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project as embodied in the proposed draft ordinance would allow the installation of murals on single-family homes in Council District 15. The installation of murals on single-family homes Citywide was contemplated in a “Version A” of an earlier draft ordinance considered by the City Council on August 19, 2013. On that date, the City Council chose not to adopt “Version A” of that earlier draft ordinance but to instead adopt a “Version B” of that draft ordinance. “Version B” did not allow murals on single family homes and instead prohibited them. The California Environmental Act (“CEQA”) Narrative (ENV 2008-2143-CE) that was prepared in connection with that earlier draft ordinance was intended to apply to either “Version A” or “Version B” of that earlier draft ordinance. Therefore, the analysis in that narrative is applicable to the proposed project.

Accordingly, it is appropriate for the current CEQA Narrative to incorporate by reference all discussion from the earlier CEQA Narrative, ENV 2008-2143-CE.

Additional Technical Analysis

Staff evaluated all potential exceptions to the use of Categorical Exemptions for the proposed project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and determined that no exceptions apply as explained in earlier CEQA Narrative ENV 2008-2143-CE. Following is an additional explanation of why the current proposed ordinance will not result in potentially adverse environmental impacts with respect to aesthetics:

Aesthetics and Visual Resources: Aesthetics generally refer to the identification of visual resources and the quality of what can be seen, or overall visual perception of the environment.

The proposed project would have less than a significant impact on the effects of scenic vistas due to the fact that there will be a height restriction that enforces the engagement of pedestrian traffic from the street level and away from scenic vantage points. A regulation that allows murals to be painted only on non-historic walls would have no impact on scenic resources i.e. trees, rocks, outcroppings, historic buildings. Further, the City’s zoning regulations generally do not impose restrictions on the colors or patterns used to paint a single-family house, unless those patterns are deemed to “present a message” and thus qualify as a sign, as defined in Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 14.4.2. Installing a fine-arts mural will in most instances will not produce greater negative aesthetic impacts than an unusual color or pattern of paint on a single-family home could cause. Also, adding a fine-arts mural in a neighborhood as a reflection of that particular community will serve as a public and community benefit, uplifting its surrounding and not degrading it. Lastly, there will be no aspect within this project that allows for the adding of new structures or any new sources of light, therefore, having no impact on affecting day or nighttime views.