



July 22, 2014

**Re: Council File No. 13-1478; Community Impact Statement**

Dear Honorable Councilmembers:

We, Gary Plotkin and Robert Ringler, declare that we are the President and Vice President respectively of Bel Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council ("BABCNC"), and that the entire board of the Bel Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council, at its regular public meeting held on June 25, 2014 in accordance with the Brown Act, voted to approve and submit this Community Impact Statement to you. The vote was unanimously in favor:

The BABCNC requests that members of the Los Angeles City Council promptly enact a moratorium on the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance until a complete staff report can be commissioned to review the merits of the 2004 ordinance and to see if current construction is meeting the intent of the original ordinance for in-fill density and affordable housing options. The process would include Town Hall meetings in the five geographical areas to hear input from Neighborhood Council officials & the public. In the report, the following need to be addressed:

- Goals for in-fill density.
- Goals for affordable housing options utilizing the small lot subdivision ordinance.
- Study of the impact and the sustainability of these subdivisions on current and future resources in the affected communities.
- Development of an actual ordinance that defines small lot subdivisions, not just guidelines.
- Plans for outreach to the communities most impacted by small lot subdivisions.
- Creation of a small lot subdivision ordinance that meets the needs of Los Angeles.

The BABCNC also requests that the following changes be made to the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance to ensure that future small lot subdivisions are compatible with the neighborhood:

1. Require compliance with the Small Lot Design Guidelines. The Small Lot Design Guidelines "outline recommendations for site organization and urban form, setbacks and building transitions, parking and driveways, building design and materials, and landscaping and access." However, "the recommendations are not mandatory." If the guidelines are not mandatory, they are unlikely to be implemented. The guidelines are the result of careful and thoughtful consideration by the Urban Design Studio, "to ensure that a project is compatible with its surroundings." Compliance with the guidelines must be made mandatory to ensure that future small lot subdivisions are compatible with the neighborhood.
2. Prohibit use of the Ordinance in Hillside Areas. Essentially all of our area is Hillside Area. Hillside Areas are not well equipped for increased density. Additionally, the increased density goes against our Community Plan's goals and objectives to limit land use intensity; preserve and enhance the positive characteristics of existing uses, such as scale, height, bulk, setbacks and appearance; encourage preservation of low density, single-family residential areas; and maintain land use densities at the lowest reasonable level.
3. Limit the Ordinance to lots that are adjacent to existing multifamily developments. As the recent re:code LA Zoning Code Evaluation Report (Public Review Draft, March 7, 2014) recognizes at page 23, "neighbors are surprised to see a single-family house replaced with four or five small-lot homes. The

best solution for this issue is to replace the base zone with a better match for the underlying development pattern (typically after an updated Community Plan)." We have seen at least one recently proposed project that would replace a 1953, single-story, single-family home with 5 small-lot 3-story homes with roof decks. The lot is adjacent on all sides only to single family homes, and those homes are only 1 or 2 stories. The nearest multifamily dwelling is 3 lots away, so the proposed project that uses the existing Ordinance is substantially incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

4. Require compliance with existing zoning setbacks to adjacent lots, streets, and alleys. The existing Ordinance changes the setbacks that are set by the zone. For example, in an RD1.5 zone, the rear-yard setback is 15 feet. This would apply to an apartment or condominium project on an RD1.5 lot. But section 6 of the Ordinance changes this setback to only 5 feet for a Small Lot Subdivision, even though the zone is still RD1.5: "However, a five-foot setback shall be provided where a lot abuts a lot that is not created pursuant to this subdivision." (LAMC 12.22 C.27(e).) The intent of the Ordinance was only to allow multiple single-family developments on a multifamily-zoned lot, so there is no reason to reduce any existing setbacks to adjacent lots when a multifamily development is proposed under the Ordinance, instead of as a condominium or apartment building.

5. Require guest parking in proportion to the number of habitable rooms in the subdivision, just like the guest parking requirements that exist for apartment and condominium buildings.


6. Prohibit tandem parking. Tandem parking in garages should not be allowed because these are single-family homes. The inconvenience of tandem parking merely encourages parking on the street.


7. Require a common trash bin with private trash collection, just like the trash requirements that exist for apartment buildings and condominiums. It is a burden for the neighborhood to have large numbers of individual trash containers out on the street for each home, 2-3 for each small lot.

8. Prohibit rooftop decks. Rooftop decks reduce neighbors' privacy and are add sources of noise and artificial light in the neighborhood.

We respectfully request that a moratorium be enacted immediately and that the above changes be made to the Ordinance, in order to minimize its negative impacts on the residential neighborhoods of our community and to enhance compatibility with existing neighborhood development.

Yours truly,

  
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Gary Plotkin, Date 7/25/2014  
President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Ringler, Date 07/24/2014  
Vice President

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