



DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Date: March 22, 2018
(Continued from August 25, 2016)
Time: After 8:30 a.m.
Place: Van Nuys City Hall
Council Chamber, 2nd Floor
14410 Sylvan Street
Van Nuys, CA 91401

Case No.: CPC-2015-4499-CA
CEQA No.: ENV-2015-4500-CE
Location: Citywide
Council District.: All
Plan Areas: All


Public Hearing: Not Required

PROPOSED PROJECT: Pursuant to LAMC Section 12.22.C.27, adoption of the Small Lot Design Standards, which will be administered as a ministerial administrative clearance.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. **Determine** that the proposed Design Standards are exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15308.
2. **Adopt** the Small Lot Design Standards as a supplement to the Small Lot Subdivision Code Amendment (LAMC Section 12.22.C.27);
3. **Adopt** the staff report as the report on the subject; and
4. **Adopt** the attached Findings.

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning




Lisa M. Webber, AICP
Deputy Director



Nick Hendricks
Senior City Planner



Jenna Monterrosa
City Planner
213-978-1377



Karolina Gorska, AICP
Planning Assistant

ADVICE TO PUBLIC: *The exact time this report will be considered during the meeting is uncertain since there may be several other items on the agenda. Written communication may be mailed to the Commission Secretariat, 200 North Spring Street, Room 532, Los Angeles, CA 90012 (Phone No. 213/978-1300). While all written communications are given to the Commission for consideration, the initial packets are sent a week prior to the Commission's meeting date. If you challenge these agenda items in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing agendized herein, or in written correspondence on these matters delivered to this agency at or prior to the public hearing. As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to these programs, services, and activities. Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or other auxiliary aids and/or other services may be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request no later than three working days (72 hours) prior to the meeting by calling the Commission Secretariat at 213/978-1300.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project Analysis	A-1
I. Project Summary	A-1
II. Background	A-1
A. Small Lot Ordinance No. 176,354	
B. Small Lot Subdivision Comprehensive Update	
i. Small Lot Ordinance Amendment	
ii. Small Lot Design Standards	
iii. Small Lot Map Standards	
III. Discussion	A-5
A. Summary of CPC Meeting, August 25, 2016	
B. Clarifications from Previous Draft	
IV. Conclusion.....	A-11
Findings	F-1
I. General Plan/Charter Findings	F-1
II. CEQA Findings.....	F-2

Exhibits:

- A – Small Lot Ordinance (effective on April 18, 2018)
- B – Previous Draft Small Lot Design Standards
(recommended for test implementation by CPC on August 25, 2016)
- C – Revised Draft Small Lot Design Standards (for CPC approval)
- D – Small Lot Design Guidelines
- E – City Council Motion 13-1478
- F – Small Lot Map Standards
- G – CEQA Narrative for Categorical Exemption, ENV-2015-4500-CE
(as presented on August 25, 2016)

PROJECT ANALYSIS

I. Project Summary

The Small Lot Design Standards (“Design Standards”) are a part of a comprehensive update to the City’s recently adopted Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance (Section 12.22 C.27 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code) and are a set of standards that regulate design elements of individual small lot homes. The Design Standards supplement the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance Amendment (“Ordinance Amendment”, Exhibit A).

Pursuant to the State Subdivision Map Act Section 66473.5, the Ordinance Amendment has established a design review process for all small lot subdivision projects. The Ordinance’s amended language recognizes a set of Small Lot Design Standards to be reviewed and adopted by the City Planning Commission. The Design Standards will create specific and enforceable rules regarding design for all small lots, including building orientation, primary entryways, façade articulation, roofline variation, building modulation, pedestrian pathways, fences and walls, landscaping and common open space areas. Once effective, all small lot subdivisions must comply with the Design Standards through an Administrative Clearance process as required under the Ordinance Amendment.

The Small Lot Design Standards were first presented to the City Planning Commission on August 25, 2016 (previous draft provided in Exhibit B) as a supplement to the Ordinance Amendment. At that meeting, the Commission recommended that prior to the Ordinance’s effective date staff issue a Working Draft of the Small Lot Design Standards for test implementation. This report represents a progress update on the Small Lot Design Standards following the test implementation phase. The clarifications incorporated into the proposed Design Standards (Exhibit C) have been made to address comments from the Commission, from the public, and from feedback received during test implementation. Once the Ordinance and Design Standards are both adopted and effective, all small lot subdivisions will be required to comply with the Design Standards through an Administrative Clearance process.

II. Background

A. Small Lot Ordinance No. 176,354

In 2005, the City of Los Angeles adopted the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance (“SLS Ordinance”) which introduced a new housing typology to the City. The new housing type, a small lot home, was enabled by the Ordinance’s subdivision regulations that permitted fee-simple homeownership of homes located on conventionally smaller lots and in zones where apartment units would be permitted by-right. Such permitting regulations included reduced minimum lot areas, setback and passageway requirements, and the altogether elimination of standardized open space and guest parking requirements. As a result, the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance enabled new infill housing development that has been a smart growth alternative to traditional suburban style single-family subdivisions.

While the SLS Ordinance created new homeownership opportunities to the traditional single-family or condominium, small lot projects faced challenges related to spatial planning and neighborhood compatibility. For instance, the unique characteristics of Small Lot Subdivision projects has included reduced front, rear and side yards, reduced passageways, and exemptions from open space and guest parking regulations required of all multi-family and

condominium projects, respectively. Generally, given the difficulty of spatially fitting Small Lot Homes within one infill parcel, Small Lot Subdivisions are often designed in a “row home” style. In January 2014, the Director of Planning issued the Small Lot Advisory Agency Policy, which introduced the Small Lot Design Guidelines (“Design Guidelines”, Exhibit D) and required that Small Lot Subdivision projects substantially conform or meet the intent of the Design Guidelines. At the time, the subdivision process lacked such an implementing ordinance that could require compliance with design regulations, and therefore the Guidelines were only recommendations and not mandatory.

B. Small Lot Subdivision Comprehensive Update

The Small Lot Subdivision Comprehensive Update (“Update”) was a response to City Council Motion 13-1478 (Exhibit E), numerous project appeals, and community discussion on prior Small Lot Subdivision applications. The Update includes the Ordinance Amendment, the Design Standards, and the Map Standards. Each of these elements regulates various aspects of a small lot subdivision project as summarized in Chart 1 on the following page.

i. Small Lot Ordinance Amendment

The Ordinance Amendment requires greater front and rear yard setbacks and greater setbacks when abutting single-family or more restrictive zones, and creates a division of land process for existing structures and “bungalow court” small lot projects. Additionally, the Ordinance Amendment requires that all small lot subdivision projects conform with the Small Lot Design Standards through a ministerial Administrative Clearance process.

The establishment of an Administrative Clearance process through the newly established Ordinance Amendment will enable the City, by local ordinance, to regulate the design of small lot projects based on the new standards. This enables the design review of the buildings and structures that are proposed with a small lot subdivision. As outlined in the Ordinance Amendment, the application for the Administrative Clearance is required to be filed concurrently with the filing of the Parcel or Tract Map Small Lot application and the environmental clearance. Compliance with the Design Standards is a non-appealable administrative process that will be determined prior to the required hearing for the Parcel or Tract Map. Small lot architectural plans found in compliance with all the required design standards will be stamped approved as Exhibit A and included in the subject case file.

Chart 1: The three elements of the Small Lot Subdivision Comprehensive Update

Item	Ordinance	Design Standards	Map Standards
General (All Small Lots)			
Minimum Lot Width	X		
Access Easement	X		
Lot Coverage	X		
Front, Side, Rear Yards	X		
Fences and Walls	X	X	
Building Orientation		X	
Primary Entryways		X	
Façade Articulation		X	
Varied Roofline		X	
Roof Terraces and Decks		X	
Building Modulation		X	
Pedestrian Pathways		X	
Open Area Landscaping		X	
Front Yard Landscaping		X	
Trash Enclosures		X	
Common Access Driveway			X
Common Access Walkway			X
Utility Easement			X
Maintenance Agreement			X
Guest Parking			X
On-Site Trash Collection			X
Open Space Easement			X
Mixed Use			
Building Orientation and Entry		X	
Building Design		X	
Guest Parking			X
Bungalow Courts			
Alterations or Additions	X		
New Construction	X	X	
Parking		X	
Pedestrian Pathway		X	

ii. Small Lot Design Standards

The Design Standards were distilled from the Design Guidelines and will create specific and enforceable rules regarding design for all small lots, including building orientation, primary entryways, façade articulation, roofline variation, building modulation, pedestrian pathways, landscaping, and common open space areas. Several drafts of the Design Standards have been circulated for feedback and comment, including two rounds of public review during the Public Participation period of the Update process, as well as a Working Draft that was recommended for test implementation by the Commission. The latest draft includes clarifications based on comments received throughout the Update and test implementation phase, and is provided in Exhibit C. The Design Standards are accompanied by an Illustrated Guide for Small Lot Design Standards (“Illustrated Guide”), which includes examples of past Small Lot projects and provide a narrative explaining the intent and meaning behind the Design Standards.

As previously described, all small lot subdivisions must comply with the Design Standards through a non-appealable Administrative Clearance process established by the Ordinance Amendment. The Administrative Clearance process would apply to any small lot project ("Project"). Projects include the erection or construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, relocation, addition to, or exterior alteration of any building or structure, which require the issuance of a demolition permit, grading permit, or building permit. Projects include the preservation of existing structures in a single lot and the subdivision of land for Small Lot purposes. The term Project excludes work that consists solely of interior remodeling, interior rehabilitation or repair work that does not result in alterations to the façade or change in floor area. The following are examples of building permits that are generally exempt from administrative review:

- Re-roof with no alterations to the existing roof form, roof details, eave depth, eave details, or facades of the buildings;
- Maintenance, repair, and/or rehabilitation of existing foundations;
- In-ground swimming pool where permitted by the LAMC;
- Mechanical equipment;
- Roof-mounted solar modules; and
- Exterior lighting.

Because the Design Standards are not adopted as regulatory imperatives (an ordinance), they afford the flexibility needed for architects/developers to design within a larger framework of clear and consistent objectives for Small Lot Subdivisions. The Design Standards are not effective until the City Planning Commission adopts them and after the Small Lot Ordinance becomes effective on April 18, 2018.

iii. Small Lot Map Standards

California Government Code Section 66415 defines the "Advisory Agency" as "a designated official or an official body charged with the duty of making investigations and reports on the design and improvement of proposed divisions of real property, the imposing of requirements or conditions thereon, or having the authority by local ordinance to approve, conditionally approve or disapprove maps." As part of regulating Small Lot Subdivisions, the Advisory Agency has issued the Small Lot Map Standards, with regulations that set standards for regulating the design and improvements on a parcel or tract map for access, utility easements, maintenance agreements, guest parking, trash enclosures, and open space. While the Design Standards govern the three-dimensional structures on the site, the Map Standards govern the design and improvements on the two-dimensional parcel and tract map.

The Map Standards (Exhibit G) created through the authority of the State Subdivision Map Act will update map provisions for all small lots, including common access driveways and walkways, utility easements, maintenance agreements, vehicular guest parking, short-term bicycle parking, on-site trash pick-up, and open space easements. The Map Standards will become effective by the Department of City Planning Advisory Agency memo and will be implemented alongside the Code Amendment and Design Standards.

The Map Standards will provide consistency for applicants and community members.

III. Discussion

A. Summary of CPC Meeting, August 25, 2016

The Draft Small Lot Design Standards were presented as part of the Small Lot Comprehensive Update to the City Planning Commission on August 25, 2016. At the meeting the Commission noted that the Draft Small Lot Design Standards strike a good balance between competing interests to resolve prior issues related to small lot design. Furthermore, while the Commission stressed that any future modifications of the Small Lot Design Standards should be language clarifications that do not restrict the feasibility of small lot projects, they did have the following suggestions related to specific site planning and design of Small Lot Subdivisions:

- All roof decks not facing a public right of way or private street should be internally oriented so that they do not face abutting neighbors;
- Screening of rooftop utilities to limit views of any mechanical or HVAC units should be encouraged.
- Require pedestrian and bicycle access to surrounding neighborhood of larger small lot community projects to maintain neighborhood continuity;
- Require either an awning or recess for all projects to ensure sufficient façade articulation;
- Front units that also face an internal driveway or walkway should be treated as a house with 2 faces, with enhanced articulation on both sides;
- Fences and walls should be limited to 3½ feet in height to each internal lot;
- Encourage preserving existing structures; and
- Encourage varying typologies and residences Citywide.

The Commission's suggestions have been addressed in the following section.

Per Commission's recommendation, the Department of City Planning issued a working draft of the Small Lot Design Standards on September 30, 2016 for test implementation. The intent was to allow a transition prior to the Ordinance Amendment becoming effective, and to allow City staff, project applicants, and community members to test the Design Standards on current projects to ensure its feasibility. During this testing phase, projects requesting entitlements for small lot subdivision were encouraged to review and incorporate these Design Standards into their project design as deemed feasible. The Design Standards have been utilized as recommendations as they are not effective until the City Planning Commission adopts them and after the Ordinance Amendment becomes effective on April 18, 2018.

B. Clarification from Previous Draft

Since August 25th, 2016 the Urban Design Studio has reviewed over 60 small lot projects from which Planning Staff was able to receive feedback from applicants and to ascertain the feasibility of the draft Small Lot Design Standards. Furthermore, the Small Lot Design Standards were presented to PlanCheck NC, the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils, and the LA Historic Neighborhoods Conference for feedback and questions.

Comments received from the Commission and from applicants and the community have been incorporated into the revised Design Standards. A comprehensive list of these Design Standards is presented below followed by a discussion. Exhibit C reflects the latest Design Standards that are presented for Commission adoption. In addition to the clarifications outlined below, the latest Design Standards includes an Illustrated Guide, which provides a narrative

explaining the intent of the Design Standards and provides examples of small lot projects and specific design requirements.

A1. Building Design: Dwelling Orientation

- a. *Small Lot Homes abutting a right-of-way, including a public street, walk street, public stairways (“right-of-way”) or private street shall orient the primary entryway (“front door”) toward the right-of-way or, where there is a physical site constraint, shall provide a clearly identifiable pedestrian entry to the site from the right-of-way.*
- b. *Small Lot Homes located in the interior of the subdivision shall orient the primary entryway toward and be visible from a pedestrian pathway that is connected to the right-of-way.*
- c. *Small Lot Homes that abut an alley shall orient the primary entryway toward the alley, or shall be connected to a pedestrian pathway that leads directly to a right-of-way.*

Based on feedback received clarifications have been made to describe the term “right-of-way” as a public street, walk street, or public stairway.

A2. Building Design: Primary Entryways

- a. *All Small Lot Homes shall have a primary entryway. All primary entryways shall provide the address or unit identification, ornamental low-level lighting to illuminate the entry area, and a landing area.*
- b. *All primary entryways shall incorporate at least four of the following elements:*
 - i. *The entryway shall be recessed at least 2 feet from the building façade to create a covered porch or landing area.*
 - ii. *The doorway shall be recessed at least 3 inches from the building façade.*
 - iii. *The entryway shall be designed with an overhead projection of at least 6 inches such as an awning or other architectural design features so as to distinguish the front door from the rest of the building façade, unless prohibited by LAMC Section 12.22 C.20.*
 - iv. *The entryway shall be clearly marked with a side lite window panel, adjacent window, or a door with a window.*
 - v. *The entryway shall be raised or sunken at least one stair step from the pedestrian pathway.*
 - vi. *The entryway landing area shall be enhanced with unique paving material, texture, pattern, or color that is differentiated from the pedestrian pathway.*

None of the projects reviewed during the test implementation phase had any issues meeting these standards, therefore no changes were made to this section of the Design Standards.

A3. Building Design: Primary Entryways Between Small Lot Homes

- a. *Small Lot Homes shall provide at least an 8-foot separation between the face of a primary entryway of a Small Lot Home and the adjacent building wall of a neighboring Small Lot Home. The separation may include projections as listed in 2.b.iii above, but be clear to sky for a minimum of 7 feet. The separation shall be measured along the portion of the pedestrian pathway that provides access to the entryway.*

Minor changes have been made to this standard as a response to feedback received with regards to the difficulty of incorporating projections as prescribed in A2.b.iii above. The standard now includes an allowance for projections within the minimum 8-foot separation between the

face of a primary entryway and the adjacent building wall of Small Lot projects, but requires that the separation remain clear to sky for a minimum of 7 feet.

A4. Building Design: Façade Articulation

- a. *Façades facing a right-of-way, the project perimeter, and all portions of exterior building elevations located greater than 7 feet from an adjacent Small Lot Home, shall be treated with an equal level of detail and articulation, and shall incorporate all of the following façade articulation techniques:*
 - i. *Change in exterior building materials to include at least two high-quality building façade materials that accentuate or correspond to variations in building massing. Building materials may include, but are not limited to: wood, glass, brick, metal spandrel, cement board siding, or tile.*
 - ii. *Porticos, awnings, terraces, balconies, eyebrows, or trellises of at least 6 inches in depth that provide variations in the building plane.*
 - iii. *Window treatments that are extruded or recessed from the building façade a minimum of 3 inches. Windows or doors that are flush with the plane of the building (rather than extruded or recessed at least 3 inches) will not qualify as facade articulation.*
 - iv. *A break in the façade plane of a minimum of 6 inches in depth that is applied to at least 10 vertical feet of the facade.*
 - v. *Other additional architectural enhancements to the floor of the primary entrance and below, so as to create a human scale to the building. Examples include handrails, fixed planters, and ornamental details, such as lighting, molding, or tiles.*

At its previous meeting, Commission recommended that changes in building materials and the incorporation of porticos, awnings, balconies, or trellises be prioritized to ensure sufficient articulation of the façade. Other comments were raised regarding specifying the depth of building variation, allowance for eyebrows as articulation, and emphasizing recessed or extruded windows rather than the material of the window treatment. The standard has been revised based on these comments. Clarifications have been also been made to provide examples of human scale architectural enhancements. Moreover, the previous draft of the Design Standards required that a Small Lot project meet one mandatory articulation technique and at least three out of four other façade articulation techniques. Based on comments received and project review feedback, the current draft strengthened the Façade Articulation section by requiring that all of the five façade articulation techniques be met.

A5. Varied Roofline

- a. *For any Small Lot Home façade fronting a public or private street exceeding two stories in height, the roofline shall be articulated by incorporating one of the following:*
 - i. *A roof with a slope equal to or greater than 2 inches to 12 inches, including but not limited to a sloped or curved roofline at the top of the dwelling.*
 - ii. *An open deck, with a minimum of 6 feet in depth and 8 feet in width.*
 - iii. *A flat roof with a minimum of 2 feet vertical height difference for a minimum of 10 horizontal feet along the roofline of each building façade.*
 - iv. *A break in façade plane of a minimum of 6 inches in depth that is carried up to the roofline.*
 - v. *Any form of roofline modulation such as a step back, an outdoor stairwell, or a corner balcony.*

The previous draft of the Design Standards required that one of the five roofline articulation measures to be met. Based on comments raised with regards to the importance of varied

rooflines and diverse architectural typologies the current draft of the Design Standards has strengthened the requirement and requires a project to incorporate two of the five roofline articulation measures.

A6. Roof decks

- a. *All roof decks along the project perimeter and abutting residential uses shall be stepped back a minimum of 5 feet from the roof edge, so that they are oriented away from and screened to prevent direct views of abutting residential neighbors. Roof decks facing a right-of-way are not required to be stepped back.*

At its previous meeting, Commission recommend that roof decks be buffered and screened from abutting neighbors. The previous draft of the Design Standards required a minimum 4-foot step back for roof decks to prevent direct views of abutting neighbors. Based on comments received from applicants and the Commission, the Design Standards have been clarified to require that all proposed roof decks along the project perimeter and abutting residential uses shall be stepped back a minimum of 5 feet from the roof edge. Furthermore, the Illustrated Guide that accompanies the current draft of the Design Standards encourages the setback space between the guardrail and roof perimeter to include buffering or landscaping that does not exceed the maximum allowable height.

A7. Building Massing Variation (previously Building Modulation)

- a. *Small Lot Homes shall be grouped into clusters to avoid long spans of building wall. Clusters of Small Lot Homes shall be no more than six Small Lot Homes in a single continuous row or 180 linear feet, whichever is smaller. Clusters of Small Lot Homes shall be separated with a building gap of a minimum of 6 feet in width, which shall be treated with a combination of landscaping, open space, and common walkways or driveways.*
- b. *Small Lot Homes in a single row shall provide a lateral shift or break in the façade of a minimum of 6 inches for every three Small Lot Homes or 90 linear feet, whichever is smaller.*
- c. *Small Lot Homes shall be unique in design so that there is variety between Small Lot Homes within a subdivision. For a Small Lot Subdivision containing more than six Small Lot Homes in a single row, there shall be at least two variations in building design, such as changes in dwelling orientation, primary entryways, fenestration pattern, façade articulation, or varied roofline as prescribed in Subsections 1-5. For a Small Lot Subdivision of 20 or more Small Lot Homes, there shall be at least three variations in building design as stated above.*

The previous draft of the Design Standards required a building separation of 6 feet minimum between every six Small Lot Homes. Comments were raised regarding the intent and treatment of such building separations, or how the building separation should be measured. Based on comments received, the standard is clarified to emphasize the intent of avoiding long spans of building wall, and the incorporation of landscaping, open space, and common walkways or driveways in-between these building gaps.

B1. Pedestrian Pathways

- a. *Pedestrian pathways of a minimum width of 3 feet shall be provided from the right-of-way to all primary entryways and common areas, such as common open space areas, guest parking, mailboxes, and centralized trash enclosures.*
- b. *A pedestrian pathway located within or parallel to a Common Access Driveway shall be constructed and/or treated with a change of materials, finishes, pattern, or paving that distinguishes the pathway from vehicular traffic.*
- c. *Small Lot Subdivisions of 20 or more Small Lot Homes shall provide pedestrian and bicycle access to surrounding neighborhood rights-of-way.*

The previous draft of the Design Standards required a change of paving to distinguish pedestrian pathways from vehicular traffic. Based on comments received, the standard is clarified to allow alternative ways to differentiate the pedestrian pathway, such as a change of materials, finishes, or patterns.

B2. Fences/Wall

- a. *Fences or walls abutting the street or common open space areas shall be decorative, including but not limited to latticework, ornamental fences, screen walls, hedges or dense shrubs or trees. Solid masonry walls along the right-of-way are not permitted.*
- b. *Fences or walls abutting the right-of-way and within the yard shall provide a point of entry into each lot abutting the right-of-way.*

No changes were made to this section of the Design Standards. While the Design Standards focus on the design and appearance of fences and walls, the height of fences and walls is addressed in the Ordinance Amendment. The Ordinance Amendment requires that fences and walls within the yard setback areas adjacent to a public right-of-way, except alleys, and along the perimeter of the proposed subdivision shall be no more than 3½ feet in height in accordance with LAMC 12.22 C.20. Fences and walls within the yard setback areas along the perimeter, not adjacent to the public right-of-way, of the proposed subdivision shall be no more than 6 feet in height in accordance with LAMC 12.22 C.20.

C1. Landscaping, Common Open Spaces Areas, and Amenities

- a. *All setback and open areas not used for buildings, parking areas, driveway, pedestrian pathways, utilities, and common open space areas shall be attractively landscaped and maintained.*
- b. *Required Common Open Space Areas must:*
 - i. *Be open to the sky and have no structures that project into the common open space area, except as provided in Section 12.22 C.20 (b).*
 - ii. *Be located at grade level, contiguous or connected, and readily accessible to all residents of the site.*
 - iii. *Have a minimum area of 300 sq. ft. with no horizontal dimension less than 15 feet when measured perpendicular from any point on each of the boundaries of the open space area. Driveways, parking spaces, or pedestrian pathways cannot be counted toward the open space requirement.*
- c. *The combination of required Common Open Space Areas shall be multi-functional and designed to accommodate a range of passive, active, or social uses, with enhancements such as landscaping, activity lawns, swimming pools, spas, picnic tables, benches, children's play areas, ball courts, barbecue areas, sitting areas, decorative bike racks, and/or dog washing stations. Common open space areas may include enhanced side yards and rear yards that meet the minimum area and dimension requirement above.*

- d. *All yards of a subdivision abutting the right-of-way shall be improved with landscaping (combination of groundcover, shrubs, and trees) and amenities. Amenities may include: decorative fencing, uncovered patios, enhanced pedestrian pathways, garden walls, seating areas, and/or decorative bike racks.*

The previous draft of the Design Standards did not directly address the required size or location of Common Open Spaces that are required for small subdivisions of 20 or more. Based on the comments received, the standard now outlines the requirements for Common Open Space, which includes the location and size of such spaces within Small Lot Developments with 20 or more units.

D1. Mixed Use Small Lot Building Orientation and Entry

Small Lot Subdivisions may provide Small Lot Homes that contain commercial uses at the ground floor ("Mixed Use Small Lot Homes"). Mixed Use Small Lots must comply with all other applicable regulations governing the site with regards to parking, signage, access, and FAR limitations in the LAMC. The following Design Standards shall be required for any Mixed Use Small Lot Home in addition to the other Design Standards contained in this document.

- a. *Mixed Use Small Lot Homes shall be first located along the perimeter of the subdivision abutting the right-of-way.*
- b. *A Mixed Use Small Lot Home shall provide a separate ground floor entrance to the commercial use, or an identifiable lobby that serves both the residential and commercial uses. The commercial entrance shall be directly accessible from the right-of-way and open during the normal business hours posted by the business.*

No changes were made to this section of the Design Standards. During the test implementation phase, no new mixed use small lot projects have been proposed. However, previous mixed use projects did not have any issues meeting these standards.

D2. Mixed Use Small Lot Building Design

- a. *A Mixed Use Small Lot Home shall be designed with an identifiable ground floor commercial component.*
- b. *Store entrances shall be recessed, not flush, with the edge of the building facade to articulate the storefront and provide shelter for persons entering and exiting.*
- c. *The ground floor commercial use shall be visually separated from upper residential floors, with a façade treatment such as an awning, framing, setback, or overhang of at least 18 inches in depth, so as to distinguish the commercial base of the building.*
- d. *The storefront of a ground floor non-residential use that fronts a right-of-way shall consist of at least fifty percent transparent windows and doors, unless otherwise prohibited by other sections of the L.A.M.C.*
- e. *Signage for the ground floor commercial use shall be located at or adjacent to the ground level, and be located no higher than 14 feet.*

The previous draft of the Design Standards did not address the location of signage for Mixed Use Small Lot projects. Based on comments received, the current draft requires that any signs for Mixed Use Small Lot projects be located at the ground level, and be located no higher than 14 feet.

E. Bungalow Courts and Existing Structures Small Lots

Existing bungalow courts and detached single, duplex, or triplex dwelling structures may be subdivided in accordance with the 2018 Small Lot Code Amendment. The conversion of an existing “Bungalow Court or Existing Structure” to a Small Lot Subdivision shall only be required to comply with the following Design Standards.

- 1. Common Access Driveway: Existing Common Access Driveways, pedestrian pathways, and central common open space areas shall be maintained and not reduced in size.*
- 2. Pedestrian Pathway: Pedestrian pathways of a minimum width of 3 feet shall be provided from the public rights-of-way to all primary entryways and common areas, such as centralized trash enclosures, guest parking, and open space easements. If narrower pathways exist, they may be maintained in the same footprint and area and cannot be further reduced in width.*
- 3. Existing Structures: New dwelling construction or additions to a designated or identified historic structure shall be in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.*
- 4. New Dwelling: All new dwellings proposed in addition to a Bungalow Court or Existing Structure Small Lot project shall also meet the applicable design standards in sections A, B, and C of the Small Lot Design Standards.*
- 5. Landscaping: All open areas not used for buildings, parking areas, driveway, pedestrian pathways, utilities, or amenity areas shall be attractively landscaped and maintained.*

The Ordinance Amendment includes language that allows existing bungalow courts or detached single, duplex or triplex dwelling structures oriented around a shared outdoor space and/or pedestrian paths with a Certificate of Occupancy in a proposed subdivision to be subdivided into small lots. In addition to Bungalow Court Small Lots, the current Design Standards includes standards for “detached single, duplex, or triplex dwelling” Small Lots (or Existing Structures). This change is a reflection of changes made to the Ordinance Amendment. Comments were raised regarding the treatment of nonconforming Common Access Driveways and Pedestrian Pathways. Based on the comments received, the standards have been clarified to ensure that nonconforming driveways, pedestrian pathways, and open space areas shall be maintained and not reduced in size. The preservation of bungalow courts and existing structures encourages varying typologies and residences Citywide, as advocated by the Commission.

IV. Conclusion

The SLS Ordinance has been a successful tool in the City’s toolkit of providing housing opportunities that merge the benefits of living in a condominium while allowing for homeownership akin to owning a traditional, fee-simple single-family home. The Small Lot Design Standards supplement the Small Lot Ordinance Amendment and create specific and enforceable rules regarding design for all small lots, including building orientation, primary entryways, façade articulation, roofline variation, building modulation, pedestrian pathways, landscaping, and common open space areas. The proposed changes from the previous draft of the Design Standards address Commission and community concerns regarding issues such as the treatment of building facades, pedestrian pathways, and roof decks, and ensure that projects are more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood context. The Department recommends that the Commission adopt the Small Lot Subdivision Design Standards, adopt the staff report and the findings, and determine that the proposed Design Standards are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15308.

FINDINGS

I. General Plan Findings

Because the Small Lot Design Standards are not an ordinance, and will not amend any portion of the City's General Plan, adoption of the Design Standards does not require findings to ensure consistency with the General Plan pursuant to City Charter Sections 556 and 558.

Regardless, as general practice, the Department recognizes the importance of ensuring that all adopted standards and procedures are in conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies of the City's General Plan. As outlined below, the Small Lot Design Standards are in substantial conformance with the purpose, intent and provisions of the General Plan.

A. General Plan Framework Element

The proposed Design Standards will meet the intent and purposes of the General Plan Framework Element to formulate citywide development standards for all small lot subdivisions, which will allow for a more sensitive integration of small lot subdivisions in existing multi-family residential or commercial zoned neighborhoods. In particular, the proposed Design Standards would further the intent and purpose of the following aspects of the Framework Element:

Goal 5A - A liveable City for existing and future residents and one that is attractive to future investment. A City of interconnected, diverse neighborhoods that builds on the strengths of those neighborhoods and functions at both the neighborhood and citywide scales.

Objective 5.5 - Enhance the liveability of all neighborhoods by upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm.

Policy 5.5.3 - Formulate and adopt building and site design standards and guidelines to raise the quality of design Citywide.

Implementation Program 24 - Formulate citywide development standards that:

a. Enhance and/or conserve the appearance and functionality of residential and commercial areas, including appropriate applications for mixed-use structures that integrate housing with commercial uses. The following is a preliminary standard that may be considered.

(1) Encourage and facilitate the assembly of small lots for higher-density housing or mixed-use

B. Housing Element

The proposed Design Standards are in substantial conformance with the purpose, intent and provisions of the General Plan in that they would further accomplish the goals, objectives, and policies of the Housing Element outlined below:

Objective 1.2 - Preserve quality rental and ownership housing for households of all income levels and special needs.

Policy 1.2.1 - Facilitate the maintenance of existing housing in decent, safe and healthy condition.

Policy 1.2.2 - Encourage and incentivize the preservation of affordable housing, including non-subsidized affordable units, to ensure that demolitions and conversions do not result in the net loss of the City's stock of decent, safe, healthy or affordable housing.

Policy 1.2.3 - Rehabilitate and/or replace substandard housing with housing that is decent, safe, healthy and affordable and of appropriate size to meet the City's current and future household needs.

Policy 1.2.6 - Provide incentives for the preservation of historic residential structures.

Objective 2.4 - Promote livable neighborhoods with a mix of housing types, quality design and a scale and character that respects unique residential neighborhoods in the City.

Policy 2.4.2 - Develop and implement design standards that promote quality residential development.

An adopted set of small lot design standards will create specific and enforceable design requirements to be applied to all small lot subdivision projects. These standards will be administered through the newly established ministerial Administrative Clearance process that is intended to promote quality residential development. Small lot design standards will equip the City with the tools necessary to review and revise proposed small lot subdivisions with the overarching goal to improve a project's compatibility with existing by-right zoning and neighborhood contexts. A separate set of requirements for converted Bungalow Courts and Existing Structures encourages the improvement and preservation of such housing.

II. CEQA Findings

In accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the ordinance amendment, which was adopted on April 18, 2018, was determined to be exempt under the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3). Section 15061(b)(3) establishes the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment, and where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. At the time of the ordinance's consideration by the City Planning Commission and ultimate adoption by the City Council, the ordinance included the establishment of a ministerial administrative clearance process which would enable a set of mandatory small lot design standards.

The City Planning Commission may also determine that proposed Small Lot Design Standards are exempt from CEQA pursuant to the Class 8 Categorical Exemption, set forth in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15308. This exemption consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. Construction activities and relaxation of standards allowing environmental degradation are not included in this exemption. The intent of these Small Lot Design Standards, within the Small Lot Ordinance Amendment, are improve the appearance and compatibility of

small lot subdivisions with surrounding development thus improving the aesthetic environment. The adoption of these standards do not authorize any construction activities or relaxation of standards that would allow environmental degradation. In addition, none of the exceptions to this categorical exemption set forth in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2, appear to apply. Specifically, the City Planning Commission may determine that the design standard do not present any unusual circumstances, as they will merely supplement the ordinance amendment.

Exhibits

- A. Small Lot Ordinance (effective on April 18, 2018)
- B. Previous Draft Small Lot Design Standards
(recommended for test implementation by CPC on August 25, 2016)
- C. Revised Draft Small Lot Design Standards (for CPC approval)
- D. Small Lot Design Guidelines
- E. City Council Motion 13-1478
- F. Small Lot Map Standards
- G. CEQA Narrative for Categorical Exemption, ENV-2015-4500-CE
(as presented on August 25, 2016)