

Revised Wildlife Ordinance – For CPC Consideration



Ordinance Summary and Changes

In response to the comments received regarding the draft Wildlife Ordinance that was released in April of this year, City Planning has made revisions to the proposed ordinance for City Planning Commission consideration. While the staff report provides an in-depth review of each change that has been made, City Planning has prepared this high-level summary of the ordinance and revisions to describe how the ordinance has changed from the previous iteration to the current draft. To review the full ordinance itself, the staff report, or any other project materials, please visit planning4la.org/wildlife.

Summary of Key Provisions

The Ordinance proposes additional regulations for properties where a Wildlife District is established. Collectively, the regulations in the ordinance help to limit the environmental impact of new development and protect and preserve the City's natural resources, ecosystems, and wildlife connectivity. The proposed regulations advance three goals:

Minimize Development Footprints and Land Disturbance

- **Lot Coverage:** Limiting impervious surfaces on larger lots by counting features that are not currently incorporated into the calculation of Lot Coverage, such as hardscape, sport courts, and more.
- **Residential Floor Area (RFA):** Including basements in the calculation of RFA.
- **Grading:** Lessening impacts to landform alteration and soil removal by prohibiting grading on slopes exceeding 100% natural grade, and by counting grading activities that are currently exempt toward the calculation of grading maximums.

Protect Native Biodiversity

- **Trees:** Strengthening tree protections by counting tree removal as a Project that triggers compliance with Protected Trees Ordinance, and expanding the types of trees that qualify for enhanced protection.
- **Landscaping:** Promoting biodiversity and ecosystem preservation by prohibiting invasive plants and requiring native plants be planted alongside new development.

Facilitate Wildlife Movement and Minimize Injury to Wildlife

- **Fencing:** Prohibiting design features and materials that pose threats to wildlife.
- **Height:** Reducing impacts on soil removal and landform alteration, while also promoting bird safety by capping the maximum allowable overall height of structures across a slope.
- **Trash Enclosures:** Minimizing unwanted human-wildlife interaction by ensuring trash cans are enclosed and secured.
- **Lighting:** Promoting dark sky efforts by establishing lighting maximums and requiring lighting be directed away from open space and other identified resources.
- **Windows:** Requiring bird-safe treatments for large expanses of glass to help reduce the prevalence of inadvertent bird strikes on windows.

Additionally, the Wildlife Ordinance proposes to require projects over a certain size, as well as those in proximity to identified resources, to apply for Site Plan Review- a discretionary review process. Site Plan Review allows for City Planning to work with applicants to ensure projects are oriented and designed in a way that helps to ensure the three goals listed above are met.

Summary of Ordinance Changes

Below is a summary of changes that have been made to the ordinance since the last draft was released in April, 2022.

Resources and Ridgelines

- **Wildlife Resources:** The prohibition on development activity within Wildlife Resources and their buffers has been removed. The revised standard is that Projects proposed within Wildlife Resources or their buffers would require a Biological Assessment and would be subject to Site Plan Review.
- **Ridgelines:** Specific regulations tied to presence of a ridgeline removed. Other, district-wide regulations have been added or modified to help achieve objectives of previous ridgeline-specific regulations.

District-Wide Regulations

- **Setbacks:** Added setback regulations have been removed. Current code standards will continue to apply.
- **Fences and Walls:** Locational and opacity standards for fencing and walls have been removed. Material and design prohibitions have been retained.
- **Height:** Height regulations are no longer tied to the presence of ridgelines. The 25 foot envelope height limitation is no longer proposed, while the overall height restriction has been retained as a district-wide standard, but increased from 35 to 45 feet.

- **Grading:** No significant changes have been made to the Wildlife Ordinance grading regulations.
- **Residential Floor Area:** The proposed Ordinance no longer removes the required covered parking exemption that is used for the calculation of residential floor area (RFA). The proposed Ordinance also no longer limits the allocation of RFA for slope bands exceeding 60% grade.
- **Lot Coverage:** R1 and R2 zones have been exempted from the Wildlife Ordinance lot coverage standards. Additionally, refinements have been made to the list of features that are now proposed to be included in Wildlife District lot coverage calculations.
- **Trees:** No significant changes have been made to the Wildlife Ordinance tree regulations.
- **Vegetation and Landscaping:** Planting zones were relabeled to align with brush management zones, and the preferred plant list was modified to prohibit five plant species from being planted in Zone 1.
- **Lighting:** No significant changes have been made to lighting regulations.
- **Windows:** The minimum size for a window to require bird-safe treatments has been increased, from 25 square feet to 40 square feet.
- **Trash Enclosures:** No significant changes. The proposal requires trash to be enclosed

Other Changes to the Wildlife Ordinance

- **Application:** The ordinance specifies which project activities trigger each regulation to help make it clearer when regulations will apply. Language was also added to clarify that reconstruction of a building that is damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster does not count as a new construction or major remodel project.
- **Non-Conformance/Rebuild:** Applicability of some standards has been limited to be applicable to new construction or major remodel projects, and language has been added to clarify that reconstruction of a building that is damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster does not count as a new construction or major remodel project. Additionally, a provision has been added to the Height regulations section stating that the overall height requirement shall not apply to the restoration or rebuilding of non-conforming buildings that are damaged or destroyed by natural disasters.