2014 Council Study Issue

CDD 14--02 Review City Policies Governing Housing Density and Bonus Density Calculations

Lead Department Community Development Department

Sponsor(s) Griffith, Martin-Milius

History 1 year ago: 2 years ago:

1. **Scope of the Study**

a. What are the key elements of the study?

The study would review the criteria used to determine density or intensity of a residential project. Density is a method of determining the impacts a project would have on an area, including size, scale, traffic, etc. Currently, the number of units in a project determines the density, because density is calculated as units per acre. For instance, a 100 unit one-bedroom apartment complex has a higher density than a 50 unit two-bedroom complex, even if the overall square footage of the projects is the same. In addition to zoning requirements for land area per dwelling unit, zoning standards of height, setback, open space, etc.also affect the size of resulting structures developed on a site.

This study would review zoning methods used to consider the size and scale of a project in addition to the density based on the number of units. Floor area ratios, number of bedrooms, and average unit sizes are examples of density/intensity controls that will be examined. Density may not best define the size and scale of a project, but it provides a basis for estimating other impacts on a community such as traffic, noise and student generation. One notable exception is that numbers of bedrooms is the basis for determining required parking for residential projects. The study would also consider how the state density bonus law (for provision of affordable housing) would apply with new standards; state law refers to housing units.

b. What precipitated this study?

A project was reviewed by the Council where the requested density was reduced and the applicant needed to redesign the project. When the project returned, it had the same footprint and bulk as the previous project. The applicant reduced the number of housing units by increasing the number of two and three bedroom units while keeping the same building size and scale. The project ended up with a lower density calculation because housing projects are based on the number of units rather than the size and square footage of the buildings.

c. Is this a multiple year project? No Planned Completion Year: 2014

2. **Fiscal Impact**

a. <u>Cost to Conduct Study</u>

i. Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost)

☐ Major ☒ Moderate ☐ Minor

ii. Amount of funding above current budget required $0

☐ Will seek budget supplement ☐ Will seek grant funding

iii. Explanation of Cost:

b. Costs to Implement Study Results

☒ No cost to implement.
☐ Unknown. Study would include assessment of potential costs.
☐ Some cost to implement. Explanation:

3. **Expected participation in the process**

☐ Council-approved work plan
☐ Council Study Session
☒ Board/Commission Review by Planning Commission

4. **Staff Recommendation**

a. Position: Support

b. Explanation: Providing the decision-makers with more information in reviewing residential development projects would clarify how projects are designed and the impact the project will have on an area.

Reviewed By:	Approved By:
8/15/13	8/19/13
Department Director Date	City Manager Date