



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

14-0868

Agenda Date: 1/30/2015

2015 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

NUMBER

CDD 15-04

TITLE Height Regulations to Accommodate Architectural Style

BACKGROUND

Lead Department: Community Development
Support Department(s): N/A

Sponsor(s):

Board/Commission: Planning Commission

History:

1 year ago: N/A

2 years ago: N/A

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

What are the key elements of the study?

Projects with unique design and architecture that exceed the height requirements typically require a Variance or exception for approval. Variance findings require something unique about the project site or use to approve the request. The issue can be present in any area of the city, but this study issue request was precipitated by applications in the single-family and R-2 zoning districts.

Options to study include:

- A. Amend the Variance findings in the zoning code to address the concern;
- B. Amend the code to allow projections of a wider set of architectural projects (now limited to towers, spires, chimneys, etc.);
- C. Increase the allowable height for a portion of a building;
- D. Create a height exception process and update the Single-Family Design Techniques to provide guidance on when the exceptions should be considered.

What precipitated this study?

Planning Commission review of specific projects resulted in denial because of the strict nature of the required findings. The Commission felt it would be useful to have additional options, such as unique architectural design, available to them when they considered the application request.

Planned Completion Year: 2015

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost to Conduct Study

Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost): Moderate

Amount of funding above current budget required: 0

Funding Source: N/A

Explanation of Cost: N/A

Cost to Implement Study Results

No cost to implement

EXPECTED PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS

Council-approved work plan: No

Council Study Session: No

Reviewed by Boards/Commissions: Planning Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Position: Support

Explanation: An amendment to the Zoning Code to expand the findings for approval of a height variance or exception could allow for other considerations, such as architectural enhancements, that could improve the design of a project while maintaining the intent of the zoning standard. While this study issue has merit, staff does not consider this zoning code amendment a high priority relative to other proposed study issues and given the pending staff workload in policy planning that is targeted for completion 2015.

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