

MOTION

Banning Housing Loss Through Mansionization and Capping the Size of Single Family Homes

In 2008 in response to the proliferation of out-of-scale housing development in neighborhoods throughout the City of Los Angeles, the City Council approved the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance (“BMO”) and in 2011, the City Council approved the Baseline Hillside Ordinance (“BHO”) to address the same issue of out-of-scale housing development in hillside neighborhoods. These ordinances were updated again in 2017.

The BHO and BMO, “establish new regulations for all single-family residential zoned properties”. These limitations scale the sizes of single family residences (“houses”) in single family zones such as R1, RE, RA, ect to more appropriately match existing housing stock. The BMO and BHO does not restrict maximum sized houses in multi-family zones such as R-1.2 or R-3, even if a single family home is constructed or a duplex is torn down and replaced with a single family home. As such low density multi-family zones have become a tempting site to locate new large scale houses (“McMansions”) and several neighborhoods in Los Angeles have seen duplexes demolished and replaced with single family “McMansions”, thus reducing the overall housing stock.

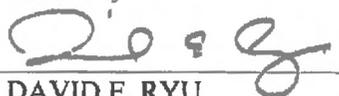
Additionally, the BHO and BMO set maximum house sizes based on the zone, size of the lot and percentage of the lot. Put simply, larger lots get larger houses. In RE-40 lots, where a lot is intended to be at least 40,000 sq feet in size, the restriction on 35% of the lot translates to a by-right allowance of 15,750 square foot residential floor area (with options that allow for potential increases of up to 20% more). This lot percentage rule also creates an incentive to combine established smaller single family lots to build McMansions.

The City is not so undersupplied in luxury housing such that new 15,750 sq ft mansions, (footage which excludes basements, pool houses and multi car garages) are truly necessary. At a time when affordable multifamily rental housing is so desperately needed the City has an obligation to ensure that single family housing stock is not competing for the same lots. It is contrary to the housing needs of the City of Los Angeles that existing multifamily housing and future multifamily housing sites are lost to McMansions. It is contrary to our environmental and housing goals that McMansions continue to proliferate throughout the City. These loopholes can be quickly and effectively addressed citywide.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of City Planning close the loophole allowing McMansions in multifamily zones and prepare an update to the BHO and BMO to apply the same restrictions applicable to homes in single family zones to all new and substantially remodeled single family residences in all multi-family zones, and ban construction of a new single family home where two or more units of housing were demolished at the site in the last 5 years.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Department of City Planning update the BHO and BMO to establish a maximum size for all new single family residences built in the City of Los Angeles. The Department shall report back with an analysis of current median sizes of single family housing types Citywide, and how the recommended maximum amount will further equity and environmental sustainability.

PRESENTED BY:


DAVID E. RYU
Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY:

MIKE BONIN (verbal)
Councilmember, 11th District

SEP 01 2020