

# View Protection and Related Issues

City Council Study Session

March 27, 2007

# PURPOSE

- Examine Glendale's regulations in comparison with those of other cities
- Identify options to address issues raised by the community
- Receive Council direction on next steps

# Summary

- Issues Raised
- Practices from other cities
- History of Hillside Regulations
- Currently applicable ordinances and guidelines
- Proposals currently before Planning Commission
- What Glendale doesn't do
- Options for action / Costs / Direction to staff

# Issues Raised

- Protection of views – from intrusive buildings and/or vegetation
  - Downhill
  - Uphill
- Protection of undeveloped open space
- Mansionization (new buildings/additions)
- Compatibility poorly defined
- Shadows, light and air
- Privacy
- Architectural style/Neighborhood character
- Alternatives for FAR calculation
- Protection of trees in wooded areas
- Intrusive signage
- Property rights

# Loss of View from a hillside



**Existing View**



**Proposed View**

# Issues associated with hillside views



# Current Efforts

- Current Hillside Working Group (mansionization, FAR alternatives)
- Compatibility Definition
- Revised Tree Ordinance
- Open Space Assessment District/City purchases of land

# City Comparison

City	View Protection	Anti-Mansion-ization	Design Review
Beverly Hills	✓	FAR	✓
Pasadena	✓	FAR	✓
Laguna Beach	✓	Max. Site coverage	✓
Malibu	✓	FAR and overall size cap	✓
Rancho Palos Verdes	✓	Max. Site Coverage	✓
La Canada-Flintridge	✓	FAR	✓
Burbank	✓	FAR	✓

# Which Views are Protected?

Beverly Hills	Downslope - "L.A. Basin"
Pasadena	Usually downslope; could be view of mountains (one case); certain views of City Hall
Laguna Beach	All views
Malibu	Views of ocean; views of hills from "scenic roads"
Rancho Palos Verdes	'Near Views' – natural settings 'Far Views' – ocean, city
La Canada-Flintridge	All views
Burbank	Usually downslope; upslope view only when there is no downslope view

# What other cities do- Beverly Hills and Pasadena

## Beverly Hills

- View is measured from 6 feet above the level pad of neighboring houses within 300 feet
- View means 'view of LA basin'
- Story poles required when there is a hearing

## Pasadena

- 'avoid blocking views to the maximum extent feasible as determined by review authority'
- Includes landscaping
- View is from 'primary living area' – living room, family room, patio – not kitchen or bedroom
- Story poles required in hillside areas

# Story Poles



# Laguna Beach and Malibu

## **LAGUNA BEACH**

- Preserve views 'as much as possible'
- New dwellings have access views similar to those from existing
- Preserving views and privacy may conflict
- Story poles required

## **MALIBU**

- Cap of 11, 172 s.f. for new homes
- Protect views of the ocean, or view of hills from scenic roads
- Story poles required; certified by surveyor

# Rancho Palos Verdes and La Canada Flintridge

## **RPV**

- Planning Commission reviews all 2nd stories to protect views – story poles required
- Privacy and off-property views considered
- Strict limits on vegetation

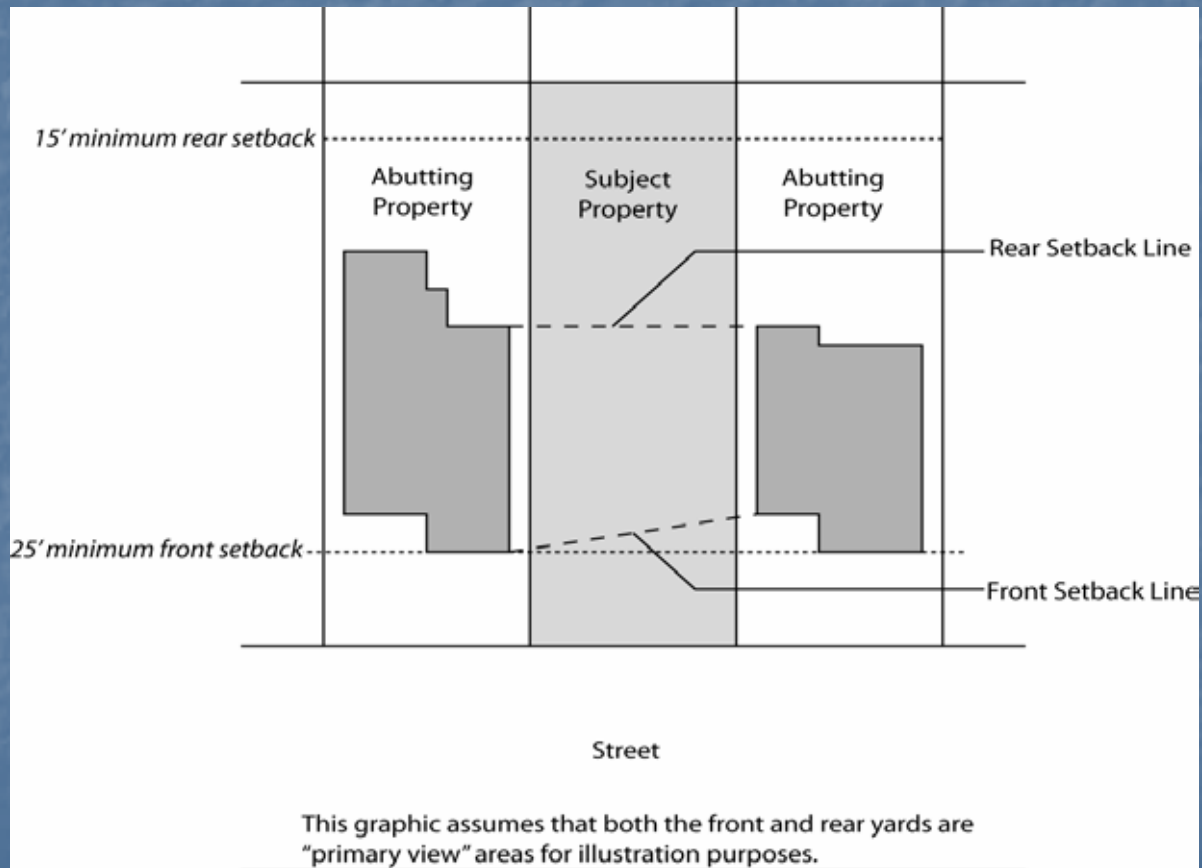
## **LCF**

- “Minimize” blocking views
- Protected views are from “primary living areas”
- Landscaping is controlled
- Story poles required with ‘2<sup>nd</sup> floor review’

# BURBANK

- Applies only to hillside areas
- Applied usually to downslope view only; unless there is none – then applied to upslope view
- Setbacks based on neighboring houses
- New homes may not “unnecessarily or unreasonably” encroach upon views
- Story poles are recommended, not codified. Not typically used.
- View studies sometimes required
- One house denied

# Burbank Setbacks



# View Protection May Lead to Greater Lot Coverage

(Rancho Palos Verdes)



# View Protection is not Design Review (Rancho Palos Verdes)



# Regulatory History (p. 1 of 2)

- 1989 – Interim Ordinance - design review introduced; development standards for ROS, R1R, R1
- 1991 – Design Review made permanent
- 1993 – “Hillside Ordinance” amending zoning, subdivision, & grading standards; “Hillside Design Guidelines” & “Landscape Guidelines for Hillside Development”

# Regulatory History (p. 2 of 2)

- 2001 – modified FAR for ROS and R1R; compatibility with the neighborhood and visual impact of projects on steep slopes introduced
- March, 2004 - modified height limit, FAR, house size, driveway slope, and landscaping standards in ROS, R1R, & R1
- Nov. 2004 – amended FAR in ROS, R1R, & R1 amending floor area ratio standard in ROS, R1R, & R1
- PC currently considering further amendments

# Applicable Ordinances and Guidelines (p. 1 of 3)

- Zoning Code

- Slope of buildable lots
- FAR
- Height
- Setbacks
- CUP requirements
- Driveway length
- Size and location of retaining walls
- Landscape plan

# Applicable Ordinances and Guidelines (p. 2 of 3)

- Single Family Neighborhood Design Guidelines
  - Predominant architectural style of area
- Hillside Design Guidelines
  - Focused on subdivision, roadways, utilities and landscaping
  - Minimal direction on building massing and scale
  - Retaining walls

# Applicable Ordinances and Guidelines (p. 3 of 3)

- Landscape Design Guidelines for Hillsides
- Design Review Board
- Subdivision Ordinance
  - Ridgeline Protection
- Indigenous Tree Ordinance
- Engineering and Grading

# Current Hillside Working Group Status

- Currently being considered by Planning Commission
- Focus on Adams Hill, Chevy Chase and city-wide changes

# Current Hillside Working Group Adams Hill & Chevy Chase

- ADAMS HILL:

- parking solutions
- smaller lots
- FAR

- CHEVY CHASE:

- increased side setbacks
- development on larger lots
- FAR

# Current Hillside Working Group City-wide Changes

- 2-story height limit
- driveway length measured from street curb
- Graduated or variable FAR
- Differentiate between uphill and downhill lots
- Modify front setback regulations for garages
- Procedural changes (e.g., AE for small increases in FAR, eliminate CUP for new houses, improve Hillside Design Guidelines)

# Defining Compatibility

- Code gives implicit guidance (mass, materials, site placement)
- Draft policy on the context for these comparisons (geographic context, compatibility versus conformity)
- Presented to joint session of both DRBs
- No consensus yet

# Issues Raised – Covered in Current Efforts

- Protection of undeveloped open space
- Mansionization (new buildings/additions)
- Alternatives for FAR calculation
- Architectural style/Neighborhood character
- Protection of trees in wooded areas
- Intrusive signage

# Issues Raised -

- Protection of views – from intrusive buildings and/or vegetation
  - Downhill
  - Uphill
- Shadows, light and air
- Privacy
- Property rights

# WHAT GLENDALE DOES NOT DO IN COMPARISON TO OTHER CITIES

- Code language on compatibility is vague.
- Code states, "Conflicting relationships to adjacent buildings ... should be avoided," but is silent on "view protection" and "privacy".
- No requirement for story poles or to show adjacent buildings. (DRB may request these.)
- Staff reports to DRB have limited comments and no recommendations or findings.

# WHAT VIEWS TO PROTECT?

- Views from hillsides downslope
- Views from hillsides upslope
- Views from flatlands to mountains
- All views

# PRINCIPAL OPTIONS

- Finish current Hillside discussion
  - Finish Open Space Assessment Distr. discussion
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- Quick Changes to Procedures and Codes
  - Code amendments in conjunction with Hillside Ordinance update
  - Comprehensive Code and Design Guidelines Review (1-2 years)
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- Moratorium on 2nd stories in hillsides

# Option One: QUICK CHANGES

1. Short-term focus group on parameters for view protection and privacy; and defining compatibility
  2. Procedural: Use of story poles, plans to show neighboring buildings
  3. Zoning Code: Require findings in DRB approvals; add view protection and privacy to design review standards
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**Advantage:** Fast turn-around

**Disadvantage:** Not comprehensive solution; view protection and privacy not defined

**Costs:** Some cost to applicants, moderate staff costs

# Option Two: Code amendments in Conjunction with/Supplementing Hillside Ord.

- Possible guidelines for 2nd stories
- Revise Hillside Design Guidelines

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**Advantage:** Addresses important issues

**Disadvantage:** Longer timeframe

**Costs:** Moderate amount of staff time; noticing and meeting preparation costs

# Option Three: Comprehensive Review

- Update Hillside Design Standards and Single-family guidelines (General Plan Update)
- One to two year process with advisory group
- Identify potential one-story neighborhood conservation areas

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**Advantage:** Most comprehensive

**Disadvantage:** Longest time frame

**Costs:** Considerable staff costs, but already contemplated as part of General Plan Update