



Motion to refer Baseline Mansionization Ordinance support letter back to committee

Agenda Item: GB091516-4
Date: 15 September
Proposed By: Doug Fitzsimmons

Background

The position taken on the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance (Council File 14-0656) by the South Robertson NC in July 2016 included a letter intended to accompany and expand upon the NC's Community Impact Statement (CIS). Many SORO stakeholders have expressed concern with language of the letter. Specifically, the letter makes reference to religious practices and observances as justification for its proposed changes, which some feel is inappropriate for a governmental entity.

The original CIS and letter are included for reference.

Proposed Motion

SORO NC should suspend issuance of a Community Impact Statement on the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance until such time as:

- I. The Land Use & Economic Development committee has a chance to revisit and revise the accompanying support letter, removing all religious references; and
- II. A quorum of SORO NC Boardmembers at a duly-noticed meeting considers and approves the revised letter.

Considerations

Committee review: Votes For: 4 Against: 0
(highly recommended)

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: \$
(applies to funding motions only)

Arguments for:

The letter and CIS were prepared in haste

The BMO is changing anyway; this gives us a chance to respond to the latest.

The NC shouldn't use religion as a basis for policy.

Arguments against:

The NC did approve the letter in July

The window for making substantive impact on the BMO is long over.

The references amount to cultural observances within SORO that shape how some homes are used here. If SORO had a significant number of farmers, say, we'd be justified in asking for accommodation for large gardens.

Doug Fitzsimmons
President

Ken Blaker
Vice-President

Jon Liberman
Treasurer

Beth Hirsch
Secretary

Martin Epstein
Corresponding Secretary

**South Robertson
Neighborhoods Council**

PO Box 35836
Los Angeles, CA 90035

P: (310) 295-9920
F: (310) 295-9906
E: info@soronc.org

soronc.org



Niall Huffman
City of Los Angeles Planning Department
Office of Zoning Administration
200 N. Spring Street, Room 720
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Via Email: NeighborhoodConservation@lacity.org

21 July 2016

Re: **Council File 14-0656**

Dear Mr. Huffman,

On July 21, 2016, the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council held a regularly-scheduled, Brown Act-noticed, public meeting of the full governing board with a quorum of 00 board members present at which the board approved the following motion and directed that a Community Impact Statement be filed reflecting its position by a vote of 00 yes to 00 no and 00 abstentions.

The South Robertson Neighborhoods Council supports revisions to the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance (BMO) with important exceptions. Following is a list of those revisions we support and the exceptions.

SUPPORT

1. Eliminate the Residential Floor Area bonus option for green buildings

After the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) became effective in January of 2014, providing incentives to builders or homeowners to be “green” became unnecessary. Also, encouraging larger, more energy-consuming homes to be built runs counter to the goal of incentivizing “green” homes.

2. Eliminate the two Residential Floor Area bonuses (proportional stories and front façade articulation)

The two design-based bonuses result in 20% larger homes, while being ineffective in producing well-designed homes.

3. Require upper-story decks, balconies, and terraces to be set back at least three feet from the minimum side yard

Stepping upper-story decks away from the minimum side yard by three feet minimizes the view angle from the upper deck down into a neighboring home or yard. This minimized view angle gives the neighbor a better opportunity to maintain their privacy with taller planting along their property lines.

EXCEPTIONS

1. Retain the garage square footage exemption

Requiring the square footage of a home's garage to be counted toward the total Residential Floor Area encourages builders to build the smallest garage allowable by code. Smaller garages are quickly overtaken with storage. The unintended consequence will be fewer cars parked in their garages and more cars parked on already-crowded streets.

Doug Fitzsimmons
President

Kevin Gres
Vice-President

Terrence Gomes
Treasurer

Beth Hirsch
Secretary

**South Robertson
Neighborhoods Council**

PO Box 35836
Los Angeles, CA 90035

P: (310) 295-9920
F: (310) 295-9906
E: info@soronc.org

soronc.org



2. Retain the over-in-height ceilings exemption

Over-in-height ceilings (or double-height spaces) result in homes with dynamic spatial relationships, instead of two floor plates pancaked on top of one another. Exempting the first 100 square feet of over-in-height ceilings allows designers to design interesting homes without having to count unoccupiable air space as Residential Floor Area.

3. Retain the covered porch exemption

Covered porches, patios, and breezeways are design features that not only add visual interest to a home, they add to the livability of a home, particularly in our Southern California climate. Counting these features toward the total Residential Floor Area will result in builders not including them in homes in order to maximize occupiable indoor space.

Additionally, the South Robertson neighborhood is home to a large Jewish community. Many Jewish homes incorporate a covered patio (a sukkah) that is used during Sukkot, a holiday where families eat and sleep outside for eight days and seven nights. As a city, we must be careful how rules we establish may have a disproportionately negative effect on a particular group of people.

4. Maintain the FAR at 0.50 for lots smaller than 7,500 square feet

The majority of lots in the South Robertson neighborhood are less than 7,500 square feet in size. Many are less than 6,000 square feet in size. An FAR of 0.50 for a 6,000 square foot lot produces a 3,000 max square foot house. R1 lots are meant for a single family. A family which includes a few kids, in-laws, and the occasional houseguest requires multiple bedrooms, multiple bathrooms, ample storage space, a large living room for gathering, and a kitchen large enough to host get-togethers. A 3,000 square foot house is not a mansion; it is a home for a family.

Also, the need for larger homes is particularly evident in Jewish communities, where Jewish families can be large and many homes incorporate two kitchens in order to keep kosher and to use during Passover.

Additionally, minimizing the allowable home size in R1 zones could result in a loss of value for those lots and an increase in value for nearby R2 and RD1.5 zones that do not have these restrictions in home size.

5. Do not establish an angled encroachment plane limit for buildings taller than 20 feet

The angled encroachment plane is an unnecessary and clumsy restriction on a home's building envelope that will, when inevitably maxed out by a builder, result in an awkwardly proportioned home. The intent of this diagram is to reduce the visual impact of a home's mass. However, the result will be to amplify the visual impact of an oddly proportioned upper floor, as this diagram would be applied to both sides of the house. The most effective way to reduce mass is by eliminating the bonuses, as previously mentioned.

6. Do not require articulation of side or front façades

Requiring articulation of the side and front façades, as currently described, is overly restrictive and will be ineffective in producing well-designed homes.



The South Robertson Neighborhoods Council supports the BMO; however, weighing the varied opinions of homeowners with the economic impact of these changes, we feel the amendment as proposed too drastically decreases buildable square footage while not doing enough to mitigate the concerns of some homeowners. We hope Planning staff will take into consideration our suggestions in an effort to pass a revised BMO that strikes a balance between the varied opinions of homeowners and the economic impact of these changes throughout the city.

Sincerely,

Doug Fitzsimmons
President, South Robertson Neighborhoods Council

Cc: Hon. Eric Garcetti, Mayor, City of Los Angeles
LA City Council Members
Vince Bertoni, Director of Planning, Department of City Planning
Council Member Paul Koretz, Council District 5
Council President Herb Wesson, Jr., Council District 10
Shawn Bayliss, Director of Planning and Legislation, Council District 5
Faisal Alserri, Senior Planning Deputy, Council District 5
Jordan Beroukhim, Planning Deputy, Council District 10



Council File: 14-0656

Community Impact Statement

As adopted by vote of the full SORO NC governing board

Yes: 0	No: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse: 0
---------------	--------------	-------------------	------------------

Date of vote: 21 July 2016

The SORO NC supports revisions to the BMO with important exceptions.

SUPPORT

1. Eliminate RFA bonuses: green buildings, proportional stories, & front façade articulation
2. Require upper-story decks be set back 3 ft from the min side yard

EXCEPTIONS

1. Retain garage sf, over-in-height ceilings, & covered porch exemptions
2. Maintain 0.50 FAR for lots <7,500 sf
3. Do not establish angled encroachment plane
4. Do not require side/front façade articulation

Doug Fitzsimmons
President

Kevin Gres
Vice-President

Terrence Gomes
Treasurer

Beth Hirsch
Secretary

Submitted by: Doug Fitzsimmons

**South Robertson
Neighborhoods Council**

PO Box 35836
Los Angeles, CA 90035

P: (310) 295-9920
F: (310) 295-9906
E: info@soronc.org

soronc.org



Motion to fund up to \$500 for the Homelessness panel discussion on October 26, 2016

Agenda Item: GB091516-5
Date: September 15, 2016
Proposed By: Quality of Life Committee/Beth Hirsch

Background

This year the Los Angeles County's Board of Supervisors passed a budget to fund a plan to help house and care for the more than 48,000 homeless in our county's borders. The City of Los Angeles has pledged millions of dollars, declared a state of emergency and proposed a \$1.2 Billion bond for November's ballot to also go towards the housing and care of this vulnerable population. There has been much confusion about how the city and county's plans would be implemented. Where would the \$450 million a year, proposed by County budget analysts, come from and what of the many new and existing homeless services organization, both public and private would benefit? And another important question. How can we as a community best help?

Therefore, the Quality of Life Committee has planned a panel discussion for the SORO community and its nearby neighbors for October 26, 2016.

The purpose of the discussion would be to help educate the public on what the government and local homelessness advocates are currently doing, have plans to do if funding is made available and what the community and our NC can do now and in the future to stem this crisis.

Proposed Funding Motion

- I. The SORO NC would fund up to \$500 for costs associated with the event, such as additional equipment rental, site or speaker fees that may come up.

Considerations

Committee review:
(highly recommended)

Votes For: 0

Against:

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: \$4000.00
(applies to funding motions only)

Arguments for:

Arguments against:

Doug Fitzsimmons
President

Ken Blaker
Vice-President

Jon Liberman
Treasurer

Beth Hirsch
Secretary

Martin Epstein
Corresponding Secretary

**South Robertson
Neighborhoods Council**

PO Box 35836
Los Angeles, CA 90035

P: (310) 295-9920
F: (310) 295-9906
E: info@soronc.org

soronc.org





Motion for the City Council to create a new ordinance increasing penalties for illegal dumping

Agenda Item: GB071516-6
Date: 15 September 2016
Proposed By: LANCC/Quality of Life

Background

The LANCC (Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition) encounters illegal dumping on the streets of Los Angeles on a daily basis. The current fine of \$1000 for illegal dumping is a cost of doing business for the individuals that commit these crimes. The City Council needs to be proactive and enact similar laws as the County and State.

California Penal Code 374.3 makes illegal dumping on public and private property punishable by a fine up to \$10,000. Also, pursuant to Section 117555 of the California Health and Safety Code, a person who dumps illegally is punishable by up to six months in jail. In addition, in August 2005, the County of Los Angeles adopted an ordinance ([13.80.030](#)) that would allow the Sheriff to seize a vehicle if it is used in the act of illegal dumping.

Proposed Motion

- I. That the SORO NC support the LANCC in asking that the City Council open a Council file to create an ordinance that mirrors the County and State law on illegal dumping.
- II. That the City Council incorporates a reward program to create incentives for residents to report illegal dumping based on a percentage of the fine collected. copy to: CM Koretz, Fuentes, Wesson

Considerations

Committee review:
(highly recommended)

Votes For: 0

Against:

Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget: \$
(applies to funding motions only)

Doug Fitzsimmons
President

Ken Blaker
Vice-President

Jon Liberman
Treasurer

Beth Hirsch
Secretary

Martin Epstein
Corresponding Secretary

**South Robertson
Neighborhoods Council**

PO Box 35836
Los Angeles, CA 90035

P: (310) 295-9920
F: (310) 295-9906
E: info@soronc.org

soronc.org

Arguments for:

The fine is too low and with no real penalties in place criminal dumpers just chalk it up to business as usual and pay no attention. Worth the risk as not likely to get caught anyway.

Larger fines create a source of revenue to pay for enforcement.

Arguments against:

The people that do this work are most likely very poor and would it could create an unfair hardship for them that would put them out of business.