



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: December 20, 2016

To: Honorable Mayor & City Council

From: Ryan Gohlich, AICP, Assistant Director of Community Development/City Planner

Subject: Request from Mayor Mirisch and Vice Mayor Krasne to Discuss Floor Area Calculations and Basements in Single-family Zones.

Attachments: None

INTRODUCTION

Mayor Mirisch and Vice Mayor Krasne have requested that this item be placed on the City Council's agenda to discuss the calculation of floor area on single family properties and the possible inclusion of basement floor area in the calculation of allowable floor area on a site. Per the request, this report outlines existing regulations and provides a summary of previous discussions on the topic. Staff is seeking Council direction on the topic.

DISCUSSION

The Beverly Hills Municipal Code (BHMC) regulates the maximum amount of floor area allowed on single-family properties and also defines what is considered floor area. The maximum amount of floor area allowed on a single family property depends on the size of the site, the area of the city in which it is located (Central, Hillside or Trousdale) and the amount of level pad on the site.

Per the BHMC, basement areas in single-family zones in the City are not counted toward the maximum floor area allowed on a site. In the code, basement area is defined as "any floor level below a story which has a finished floor level that is a maximum of three feet above grade at any point along the perimeter of the building facing a front or street side setback line and which has no windows exceeding eighteen inches above grade at any point along such perimeter of the building". A basement may extend beyond the perimeter (or footprint) of a building (but not into required setbacks) provided that the basement is below natural grade.

Counting basements as floor area was previously discussed during the Planning Commission and City Council meetings on single-family bulk and mass between 2012 and 2014. During this time, the City's consultant made a recommendation that the City should consider counting basement area as floor area, but also allow property owners to

exempt portions of basement areas from floor area calculations in exchange for building a home in such a way that would reduce the perceived bulk and mass from the street.

The concept of counting basements against the allowed floor area resulted in much discussion, both in support and opposition, during the numerous public hearings associated with the bulk and mass studies. At the conclusion of deliberations, the consensus of the Planning Commission and City Council was to retain the existing standards and not count basements toward the allowable floor area. Accordingly, the report seeks direction as to whether the City's basement standards should be reconsidered.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council hold a discussion on the topic of basement area and floor area in single-family zones and provide staff with direction. If the City Council wishes to include all or a portion of basement areas in the Hillside in the calculation of allowed floor area staff would need to return to the City Council to discuss priorities and how this effort would fit into the Department work plan. The City Council may also refer this issue to the Planning Commission for further analysis and discussion.

Susan Healy Keene, AICP

Approved By

