



South Pasadena Municipal Code (SPMC) Amendments: Design Review Streamlining and State Housing Law Consistency Information Sheet

Objective

To simplify the development review process in response to City Council direction in an effort to reduce project review timelines, and also in support of Housing Element goals and policies that call for streamlining and to remove barriers to housing production.

Amendments Summary

Revisions include routine updates to terms such as replacing references to the Planning Director with the Community Development Director and including Accessory Dwelling Units in the list of projects that are exempt from review, in keeping with state law.

More substantial changes focus on streamlining the design review process to achieve the goal of development of high-quality housing in a shorter timeframe. Following dissolution of the Design Review Board, its duties will be shifted to either the Director or the Planning Commission, simplifying the project review process. Staff proposes to extend the length of time that an entitlement is valid, from one year to two, and to increase the number of administrative extensions of such entitlements from one to two. Any entitlement that would require an extension beyond 48 months would require a hearing before the Review Authority that initially approved the project. The SPMC would also be revised to reiterate that the Director shall have the authority to approve or deny ministerial projects, subject to state law.

Lastly, the Director would have the authority, upon written notice to the City Council and Planning Commission, to initiate Zoning Code or Zoning Map amendments. This would eliminate a step in the Zoning Code/Map amendment process and allow staff to be more responsive in meeting state mandates and/or responding to local concerns identified by residents and applicants.

Affected SPMC Sections

36.410.040 Design Review
36.420.040 Time Limits and Extensions
36.500.060 Authority for Subdivision Decisions
36.510 Tentative Map Filing and Processing
36.510.160 Ministerial Approvals

Environmental Clearance

The proposed changes are considered routine in that the SPMC is being updated to be consistent with existing law. These regulations that already govern land use in the City, and the changes will bring the SPMC into compliance with applicable state statutes. As such, the proposed amendments do not need to be analyzed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because they qualify for the common sense exemption found in CEQA Article 5 §15061(b)(3).