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Summary of Studio Village Listening Workshop Comments

Date: September 14, 2018
 Re: Studio Village Listening Workshop Summary
 Location: El Marino Park, Recreation Center, 5301 Berryman Avenue, Culver City, California, 90232

On August 7, 2018, from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM, a community meeting was held at the El Marino Park Recreation Center to discuss single family development in the Studio Village neighborhood. John Kaliski Architects (JKA), with City Staff input, heard feedback from residents about their vision and concern for future development in their neighborhood.

Community members who attended included:

- Greg Arnold
- Kathy Barreto
- Mitch Blake
- Kathleen Lanzakotta
- Ann Miks
- Ken Nabiner
- Grace Nadel
- Kate O’Connor
- Art Perez
- Ida Rabiner
- Mike Scarano

Staff and consultants that attended included:

- City of Culver City, Current Planning Division: Susan Herbertson, William Kavadas, Deborah Hong
- City of Culver City, Advanced Planning Division: Tracy Bromwich
- JKA: John Kaliski, Carolyn Matsumoto

A sixty-minute survey exercise was conducted with the group as a whole. The survey exercise consisted of twenty site photographs of Studio Village. The group voted with red and green cards to indicate their “like” or “dislike” of each photograph. A second twenty-minute community comment exercise followed which gave participants the opportunity to share their interests/concerns and to describe what works and doesn’t work in their neighborhood.

Survey Exercise Findings

1. **Houses that extend past neighboring houses towards the rear yard are strongly disliked.**
 Residents consistently disliked houses that extended beyond their neighbors’ rear building footprint because of the contrast in size and the privacy concerns of one house looking at or into another. When asked why a resident raised a red card for a house, their reply was, “the house goes all the way back into the lot.” Another resident commented, “The privacy issue: when you get a large house that takes up most of the lot, they’re looking into your master bedroom. That’s an issue for us. The houses are falling into our yards.”

2. New two-story homes that are modulated and maintain the original building footprint are preferred.

New two-story construction was liked, regardless of architectural style, if it was modulated at the front and side yards, it maintained the original building footprint, and it maintained the 10-foot driveway along the side yards. Regarding a new two-story home, one resident commented, "I give them credit, they stayed in the original footprint of the house." Another resident agreed, "It could have been worse. It could have gone further back. At least they kept the rear garage."

3. Remodels and additions that are consistent with the architectural styles of the main building and remain within the first-floor footprint are preferred.

Second-story additions and remodels were liked if they were consistent with the architectural style of the main house and if they stayed within the footprint of the existing building. When asked whether standards such as color restrictions should be encouraged, a resident responded, "An association in our neighborhood worries me because it might be too restrictive. I could live next door to it but I don't have to like it and I won't tell them to repaint it." Houses that had cantilevered elements elicited dislike votes from half of the residents. One resident commented, "Hangovers [cantilevers] introduce a dynamic not seen in traditional architecture."

4. Residents were split on their like/dislike of modern style homes.

Modern homes were favored if they generally maintained the original tract footprint, were well modulated, and did not maximize the allowable FAR. One resident noted the neighborhood transition with new modern houses being built, "I'm beginning to adjust to this. The first few ones were not attractive as this but I'm adjusting. The veranda softens it. A couple of years ago, I wouldn't have liked it." A resident who raised a green card commented, "I like the design. I like the lines, glass, and different materials. I would love to see more houses like this for our neighborhood." Another resident who voted red for the same house commented, "It's totally changing the character of the neighborhood and we'll no longer be Culver City. It's Manhattan Beach."

5. Garage standards could be updated to reflect current lifestyles and improve pedestrian safety.

One resident strongly felt that front-facing garages are a safety issue, especially for children and senior community members, which disrupt the continuity and walkability of sidewalks. Another resident noted that required covered parking could be eliminated as a majority of residents use their garage as storage space and in anticipation of a driverless future with the expansion of public transit options. One resident noted that new cars are increasingly growing larger and no longer fit within the minimum 20-foot length required for a backup aisle (i.e. driveway) leading to a front facing garage. A home with a subterranean front-facing garage was unanimously disliked because the house maximized the allowable FAR, filled the zoning envelope, and appeared taller because of the subterranean garage.

6. Code enforcement of landscaping could be improved.

Several comments were made regarding the improvement landscaping could bring to otherwise "boxy" or bland houses as well as the lack of City enforcement of landscaping. "I wish they would enforce them. Anything is better than just bare dirt. It's been that way for a decade."

Community Comments Findings

7. Reduce the existing 0.60 floor area ratio (FAR).

Several residents agreed that the existing 0.60 FAR allows for houses that are too large for the existing context, "Recommend the FAR be reduced: 0.60 is too big." One resident preferred to maintain the existing 0.60 FAR and commented, "I think we should maintain the ability to go up in stories and add volume. The overreach is when people are blowing out side yards and are three feet from the fence."