

Potential Strategies for Addressing View Impairment from Trees & Vegetation



March 24, 2016



Background

- ▶ At the January 14, 2016 meeting, additional information was requested regarding:
 - ▶ Processing View Matters, including Court
 - ▶ Definitions of View
 - ▶ City-owned Trees
 - ▶ Cost and Staffing Projections
 - ▶ Rolling Hills Estates View Ordinance



Process

- Subject to California Permit Streamlining Act, requiring application be processed within 30 days
- Court filing fee approximately \$400
- Currently 1 year wait for Court date
- Private view easement recording cost \$25
- Attorney fees likely for either scenario



Definitions of View

- Visual scene from fixed vantage point or location from principal residential structure. Not an unobstructed panorama of the features in the scene. (Laguna)
- Visually impressive scenes of ocean, islands, mountains, canyons, valleys or ravines. (Malibu)



Definitions of View

- Vista of features including bodies of water, beaches, coastline, islands, skylines, mountains, city lights, ridges, hillside terrain, canyons, geologic features and landmarks. Not an unobstructed panorama. (RHE)



Definitions of View

- ▶ A scene from the primary living area of residence or active use areas of nonresidential building, including upslope and downslope scenes, but generally medium to long range. Includes skylines, bridges, landmarks, distant cities, distinctive geologic features, hillside terrains, wooded canyons, ridges and bodies of water (Tiburon)



Definitions of View

- Near View is a scene located on the peninsula including valley, ravine, equestrian trail, pastoral environment or natural setting (RPV)
- Far view is scene located off peninsula, including ocean, L.A. Basin, city lights, harbor, Vincent Thomas Bridge, shoreline or islands (RPV)

Definitions of Viewing Area

- ▶ Hallways, closets, mechanical rooms, bathrooms and garages shall not be considered as viewing areas (Laguna)

Definitions of Viewing Area

- Bedrooms, master bedroom retreats, offices, hallways, closets, laundry rooms, mechanical rooms, bathrooms and garages shall not be considered main viewing areas (Malibu)

Definitions of Viewing Area

- ▶ Area of structure or lot where City and owner determine best and most important view exists. Excludes bathrooms, hallways, garages or closets (RPV)



City-owned Trees

- City has process in place to allow residents to trim City trees at their cost
- Application must be from resident adjacent to tree
- No recourse for resident with view blockage under current system
- Parallel system for City trees could be established requiring contact and mediation
- Final decision would fall to City



City-owned Trees

- ▶ Public Works has a list of approved trees that grow up to 25 feet at maturity
- ▶ Current trimming schedules do not take views into account

Costs of Implementation

- Addition of Planning Associate and Office Assistant would cost \$217,360
- Additional costs would include computers and supplies
- Possible additional staffing needed in City Attorney's office to provide legal advise/support
- Current staffing levels will be inadequate to handle the expected level of interest



Costs of Implementation

- Cost will be dependent on the level of Staff involvement
- Costs can include staff time, Arborist, mediation, arbitration
- A fee study will need to be conducted to establish appropriate fees

Rolling Hills Estates Process

- Staff explains process to resident
- Resident must send certified letter to vegetation owner
- Resident applies for view restoration permit
- Staff prepares radius maps and mails notices
- Per RHE Director, only one case has gotten as far as mediation



Considerations for Torrance

- Definitions
- Process
- Appropriate Restoration Actions
- Responsibility
- Staff Involvement



Decision Points

- Is a model similar to Rolling Hills with minimal staff involvement acceptable?
- Is a model that sends disputes to Civil Court rather than to Council or Commission acceptable?
- Does the Council wish to include City Trees?
- Does the Council wish to regulate the types and heights of trees and landscaping in the Hillside?



Next Steps

The Committee may choose to:

- Direct staff to return with additional information; or
- Return with specific recommendations for implementation/ creation of an ordinance; or
- Forward a recommendation from the Committee to the Council for further action



Discussion and Questions

