

# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 East Anapamu Street, Room 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Agenda Number:**  
**Prepared on:** September 15, 2005  
**Department Name:** P&D  
**Department No.:** 053  
**Agenda Date:** September 27, 2005  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimate Time:** 30 minutes on 10/18/05  
**Continued Item:** NO  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Document File Name:** G:\GROUP\Permitting\Case Files\Oa\2000s\05 cases\05ORD-00000-00001 Height Definition A2\Board of Supervisors\Set hearing agenda letter 10-18-05.doc

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Dianne Meester, Assistant Director  
Planning & Development

**STAFF CONTACT:** Noel Langle, Planner III  
568-2009

**SUBJECT:** Set hearing to consider zoning ordinance text amendments to Articles II, III and IV of Chapter 35 of the Santa Barbara County Code: Case Nos. 05ORD-00000-00001 (Article II Coastal Zoning Ordinance); 05ORD-00000-00002 (Article III Inland Zoning Ordinance) and 05ORD-00000-00003 (Article IV Montecito Zoning Ordinance) regarding implementing a new methodology for determining the height of a structure.

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## **Recommendation:**

That the Board of Supervisors set for hearing of October 18, 2005 to consider the following actions:

Consider the recommendations of the County Planning Commission, Montecito Planning Commission and Process Improvement Oversight Committee and:

- A. Find that these amendments are categorically and statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15265 of the Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA.
- B. Adopt findings for approval of the proposed amendments.
- C. Adopt a Resolution and Ordinance 05ORD-00000-00001 amending Article II.
- D. Adopt 05ORD-00000-00002 amending Article III.
- E. Adopt 05ORD-00000-00003 amending Article IV.

*Estimated hearing time: staff presentation 15 minutes; total time 30 minutes.*

## **Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:**

The recommendations are primarily aligned with Goal No. 1, *An Efficient Government Able to Respond Effectively to the Needs of the Community*, Goal No. 6, *A County Government that is Accessible, Open, and Citizen-Friendly*, and is required by law or routine business necessity.

## **Executive Summary and Discussion:**

One of the Planning & Development Department's process improvement efforts has been to revise the methodology for determining the height of structures in order to address the problems that staff, design review boards and designers have encountered in working with the existing definition including:

- Lack of consistency in determining the height of a structure based on how the average grade is calculated.
- Penalizing a structure that utilizes one or more ground levels (in an attempt to reduce grading and perceived building mass) due to the use of the highest mean roof height as required by the existing definition.
- Use of ornamental features located adjacent to the exterior walls of the structure (e.g., patios, planters) and exaggerated roof eave widths to lower the calculated height of the structure.

A committee comprised of local architects and Planning & Development staff members was formed to develop a new height calculation methodology. The committee developed a draft methodology that was tested by staff, and reviewed and tested by the County and Montecito Boards of Architectural Review on actual projects on their respective hearing agendas. The methodology was also reviewed by the Montecito Association Land Use Committee.

The Montecito Planning Commission acted to recommend approval of the amendments to Articles II and IV on June 15, 2005. The County Planning Commission acted to recommend approval of the amendments to Articles II and III on September 14, 2005.

A complete staff report along with the necessary resolutions and ordinances will be provided prior to the actual hearing on the amendments on October 18, 2005.

## **Mandates and Service Levels:**

Amendments to Articles II, III and IV of Chapter 35 of the County Code are legislative acts under the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors. Sections 35-180, 35-325 and 35-487 (Article II, III and IV respectively) provide that the recommendation of the Planning Commission shall be transmitted to the Board of Supervisors and that the Board shall schedule and hold a public hearing on the matter.

## **Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

The work effort associated this ordinance amendment is accounted for in Planning & Development's budget for fiscal year 2005-06. There are no facilities impacts.

## **Special Instructions:**

Planning & Development will satisfy all noticing requirements.

**Concurrence:** None.