

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

May 4, 2015

TO: All Planning Staff

FROM: Richard J. Bruckner
Director

*DJS
for
RJB*

SUBDIVISION AND ORDINANCE POLICY NO. 2015-01– STORY POLE POLICY FOR SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NORTH AREA

PURPOSE

Story poles are three-dimensional, full-scale, silhouette structures that demonstrate the location, height, and massing of a proposed development project. These structures assist with the assessment of potential visual impacts from various vantage points.

The recently adopted Local Implementation Program of the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program (SMMLCP) requires the construction of story poles as part of the visual analysis required for all Coastal Development Permit applications. This policy provides a similar requirement for certain applications within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area (SMMNA), which adjoins the territory covered by the SMMLCP.

APPLICABILITY

This policy shall apply to all applications requiring discretionary approval within the SMMNA that could impact visual resources, including but not limited to applications regarding proposed project sites:

- Within Hillside Management Areas, as defined in Title 22 of the County Code;
- Visible from trails identified by the National Park Service Geographic Information Systems Data;
- Visible from scenic routes or routes with scenic qualities identified in the SMMNA Plan; and
- Requiring a Variance from the Significant Ridgeline protection standards of the SMMNA Community Standards District (CSD).

This policy shall apply to all applications which are pending, but which have not yet been subject to a public hearing, as of the date of this memo. This policy shall also apply to all applications which are filed after the date of this memo.

This policy shall remain in effect until such time that the SMMNA CSD is amended to require the construction of story poles.

WAIVER

The Director may waive the story pole requirement only if it is determined that there is no possibility that the proposed project will create or contribute towards adverse impacts to visual resources. This determination shall be based on evaluation of topographic maps, photographic evidence, and/or on-site investigation.

STANDARDS

Story poles required by this policy shall comply with the following standards:

- 1) Story poles shall be constructed at least 30 days prior to the public hearing date. The applicant shall submit photographic evidence of the story poles along with an affidavit signed by a licensed architect, engineer, or surveyor stating that the story poles have been placed in accordance with the proposed plans. In some cases the Director may require early installation of story poles if view issues are anticipated.
- 2) Story poles associated with an application that has been inactive for three months shall be removed until the application returns to an active status.
- 3) Story poles shall remain in place until the proposed project has been reviewed at a public hearing and the appeal period(s) have ended. If the proposed project is appealed, the story poles shall remain in place until the appeal(s) has been acted upon. Story poles shall be removed within seven calendar days after a final decision has been made and the appeal process has been exhausted.
- 4) Story poles shall be constructed of two-inch by four-inch lumber or other sturdy material approved by the Director. Guy wires, support beams, or other support measures may be used to ensure that the story poles are able to withstand weather. Guy wires shall be strung with bright red or orange tape, one foot in length, spaced every six feet along the length of the guy wire to the ground.
- 5) Story poles shall be constructed to delineate the most distant corners of the proposed primary building and any proposed accessory buildings, including roof ridgelines, chimneys, and balconies.
- 6) The height of story poles shall indicate the final height of all proposed buildings. Proposed grading shall be accounted for in the height of the story poles. The top two feet of the story poles shall be painted red or orange. Bright red or orange tape shall be strung between the story poles at the top of the painted area.
- 7) Story poles shall be constructed safely. If the story poles become unsafe at any time, they shall be repaired and reset immediately. The story poles shall be removed immediately if the County determines that they are a public safety risk.

RJB:SA:MG:lm