Recommendation for Approval of Updates to the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District - April 24, 2019 Regional Planning Commission Hearing

James Drevno
JDrevno@planning.lacounty.gov
Regional Planner, Community Studies East Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear James Drevno:

In 2009, the Board of Supervisors adopted Ord. 2009-0032 which enacted the La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District (§22.44.139). This Community Standards District (CSD) established development standards for the Foothill Boulevard corridor within La Crescenta-Montrose. The CSD addresses building and structure design, architectural style, landscaping, yard setbacks, signs, and permitted uses. The intent is to improve the appearance of the corridor through quality built design and landscaping.

Unfortunately, implementation of the CSD has proven difficult. Some of the CSD language is vague and subject to different interpretations making it problematical to enforce. Terms and phrases such as “style,” “earth toned color,” and “consistent with the style” make it difficult to understand what is allowed and not allowed because the language does not provide for clear, prescriptive standards. Also, since approvals are issued through an administrative site plan review, it leaves virtually all discretion of approval in the hands of County staff. As a result, achieving the CSD’s objectives have been mixed.

At the request of the Crescenta Valley Town Council, county planners have been working closely over the last three years with the Town Council’s Land Use Committee to address the issues discussed above, clarify the CSD language, and find workable solutions.

The Department of Regional Planning, the Crescenta Valley Town Council, and the Land Use Committee held an Open House event for the community for this project on May 30, 2018, at the La Crescenta Library.

No new development or zone changes are proposed as a part of this ordinance.

Updated design standards consist of updates to existing architectural, sign, landscaping and parking requirements along Foothill Boulevard to improve the appearance of the corridor and promote walkability.

Design standards for R-3 zoned multi-family properties are related to the design, landscaping, and orientation of multi-family buildings and are intended to ensure that any new multi-family buildings are designed to be compatible with existing residential neighborhoods. This R-3 standards were only revised for language clarity and consistency.

The project goal was to update the CSD and replace ambiguous language while still maintaining reasonable regulations to foster quality development along the Foothill Boulevard corridor. The CSD will set forth standards and regulations for future development within the CSD boundary areas only. We would like to thank the staff at both the Department of Regional Planning and Supervisor Kathryn Barger’s office for their ongoing help and support in working with our community, its residents, the Land Use Committee and the Crescenta Valley Town Council on updating this important ordinance. The Crescenta Valley Town Council and its Land Use Committee recommend approval of this update to amend the existing La Crescenta-Montrose CSD.

Paul Rabinov
4888 Sunset Avenue
La Crescenta, CA 91214
James Drevno
Regional Planner, Community Studies East Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Foothill CSD

Good morning Mr. Drevno,

I wanted to be brief in my support for the revisions everyone on the CVTC Land Use as well as the community have been diligently working on for the past 5 years.

As a long time resident and business owner in the community the changes recommended are much clearer and more inline with what the community as whole supports. I am also the past President of the CV Town Council and was privy to the complaints and restrictions with the original document.

I truly hope the planning commission will support and approve the Foothill-CSD.

Respectfully,

Robbyn Battles
Battles Real Estate-JohnHart “Real Estate Redefined”
818-388-1631
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JDrevno@planning.lacounty.gov
Regional Planner, Community Studies East Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear James:

As you know, for the last four years, our community has been closely involved in revisions and updates made to our La Crescenta-Montrose Community Standards District document.

The stated purpose of the current CSD is to:

- Enhance the character and vitality of the La Crescenta-Montrose community.
- Promote thoughtful design to ensure commercial and multi-family buildings enhance the foothill characteristics of the community.
- Improve the appearance of the Foothill Boulevard commercial corridor.
- Create Pedestrian-friendly environment and buffer single-family residences from more intensive adjacent uses.

This purpose remains unchanged in the proposed Update.

The need for the revisions to the original document arose from the complexity of the original document and the difficulty of enforcing and evaluating the actual requirements versus suggestions and a variety of options. The approval process was too wide open for interpretation by all parties involved.

The proposed Update has had the benefit of several staff members from the Department of Regional Planning applying their expertise and discernment in order to simplify the document and make it very clear both in the written and graphic description of the requirements.

We feel that the proposed Update to the La Crescenta-Montrose CSD meets the purpose for which it was originally created, in a clear and concise manner.

We strongly support the approval of the Updated document and are looking forward to its impact on the future development of our Community.

Sincerely,

Inés Gómez-Chessum
Architect

5020 Rosemont Ave.
La Crescenta, CA 91214
To whom it may concern,

I got your post card in the mail and took a look at the proposed project and I am saddened by your lack of relevancy to all the other issues in my community. I’m not sure what you agenda is but I am not on board with it thus far. You have to date supported the overbuilding of lots in the area, destruction of protected California Oak trees, encouraged problems with the already limited parking available by granting variances to overbuild lots, increased the crime rates, increased our property taxes and lowered our property value. Outstanding work. How about we fix the roads and fix all the sidewalks before we participate in another “earrings on a pig” improvement. I am so supremely disappointed in LA county and their agenda for the foothill areas. Please help me understand your agenda to destroy my living space by explaining the thought process behind yet another ridiculous and unnecessary plan by LA county.

Thank you,

Meredith Kiser

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Commerce CA 90023

“This world would be perfect if everyone left everything and everyone better than when they found it.” Virginia Lamar