



## CITY OF SIGNAL

2175 Cherry Avenue • Signal  
Hill, California 90755-3799

### STAFF

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12/9/2025

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#### **AGENDA ITEM**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: CARLO TOMAINO  
CITY MANAGER**

**BY: MATTHEW E. RICHARDSON  
CITY ATTORNEY**

**SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AN OMNIBUS ORDINANCE AMENDING VARIOUS  
SECTIONS OF THE SIGNAL HILL MUNICIPAL CODE TO CLARIFY REGULATIONS,  
CONFORM TO STATE LAW, AND UPDATE PROVISIONS**

#### **Summary:**

City of Signal Hill ("City") staff annually identifies and proposes changes to sections of the Signal Hill Municipal Code ("SHMC") that require updating, to conform with State law, remove obsolete or redundant regulations, and generally integrate best practices. Staff, in collaboration with the City Attorney's office, has prepared various amendments and additions to the SHMC, including changes to the Zoning Code, health and safety regulations, public streets and parking regulations, and other miscellaneous changes. The proposed updates to the SHMC are discussed in more detail in this report and are presented to the City Council in one comprehensive omnibus ordinance ("Ordinance").

#### **Strategic Plan Goal(s):**

- Goal No. 2 Community Safety: Maintain community safety by supporting public safety services and increasing emergency preparedness.
- Goal No. 4 Infrastructure: Maintain and improve the City's physical infrastructure, water system, and recreational spaces.
- Goal No. 5 High-Functioning Government: Strengthen internal communication, recruitment, retention, systems, and processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of City services.

#### **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends the City Council approve the proposed changes to the Signal Hill Municipal Code ("SHMC") by introducing for first reading the Ordinance entitled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA

RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SPECIFIED PROVISIONS OF TITLE 20 (ZONING) OF THE CITY'S MUNICIPAL CODE AND OTHER SPECIFIED MUNICIPAL CODE PROVISIONS PURSUANT TO THE CITY'S ANNUAL CODE UPDATE, TO CLARIFY REGULATIONS, BOLSTER EXISTING ONES, REMOVE UNNECESSARY OR REDUNDANT PROVISIONS, UPDATE REGULATIONS TO CONFORM TO STATE LAW AND MODERNIZE SAME; AND FINDING SAID ACTION EXEMPT FROM CEQA

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Background and Analysis:

The omnibus Ordinance includes revisions and additions to numerous provisions of the SHMC. Below are brief summaries of the sections proposed for revision and addition.

**I. Zoning Code**

Pursuant to Government Code section 65854(a), the City's Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider the below enumerated changes to the Zoning Code codified in Title 20 of the SHMC. The changes discussed in subsection (a) below were recommended for adoption at the Planning Commission's August 19, 2025, regular meeting. Staff recommended the remaining changes for adoption at the October 21, 2025, regular meeting.

*a. Permeable Landscape*

Since methane is combustible and potentially explosive if present at certain concentrations in the presence of oxygen, the SHMC regulates development to ensure concentrations remain at a certain level with the use of various types of venting systems and other mitigation measures. Where a relatively impermeable barrier, such as a concrete slab, artificial turf, decomposed granite, pavers, asphalt driveways and concrete walkways, is present at the ground surface, methane cannot dissipate and may become trapped or pressurized.

Through the proposed Ordinance, the City regulates changes to existing hardscape and landscape materials in the City's residential and commercial zones by requiring a certain level of permeability be maintained and establishing a maximum percentage of nonpermeable replacement materials to protect public safety while allowing for design flexibility. Specifically, for residential districts, the proposed Ordinance limits the maximum amount of nonpermeable materials, whether hardscape material or artificial turf, within the front setback. For both residential and commercial districts, newly constructed buildings or structures, and structural and physical improvements, the Ordinance both limits the maximum allowed nonpermeable materials, including artificial turf, and may require installation of vent boxes for methane mitigation.

Further, any deviation or change-out of existing hardscape materials or landscape materials on either residential or commercial properties requires administrative review by the Director of Community Development, and approval, prior to installation, to ensure the requirements of the Ordinance are met and methane mitigation is maintained.

*b. Defined Terms within the Zoning Code*

Certain terms used in the Zoning Code are defined in Chapter 20.04 of the SHMC. Various existing

definitions within Chapter 20.04 point to Chapter 20.68 of the SHMC, which no longer exists in the SHMC. Accordingly, the proposed Ordinance updates this chapter by removing reference to regulations that are no longer in effect.

The terms “day nursery” or “childcare nursery” were amended to mean and refer to the manner in which such terms are currently defined in Section 8.16.020 (Definitions) of Chapter 8.16 (Institutions) of Title 8 (Health and Safety) for uniformity throughout the SHMC, to update the definition of such term, and to more accurately encompass the intended use. Additional existing definitions are proposed to be amended for clarity.

Further, the terms “foster home” and “restaurant, drive-in” are deleted from the definitions section of the Zoning Code (Section 20.04.303 and Section 20.04.612 respectively), as such terms are obsolete. Staff also amended terms within Chapter 20.04 that used “foster home” in their definition to remove such reference.

*c. Off-Street Parking Regulations*

The Ordinance updates off-street parking requirements codified in Chapter 20.70 “Off Street Parking” of the SHMC and in Section 20.10.130 “Off-street parking”. The proposed changes clarify regulations concerning the use, maintenance, and design and construction of off-street parking facilities. In addition, new provisions are recommended that specify minimum parking requirements and would allow for alternative methods with greater flexibility to meet such minimum parking requirements. These proposed alternatives include the use of shared parking agreements, offsite parking facilities and requests for reductions in the schedule of required minimum off-street parking, with specified criteria to be satisfied.

*d. Property Development Standards*

The proposed Ordinance deletes Section 20.66.060 “Lot area-divisions resulting in smaller parcels prohibited” of Chapter 20.66 (Property Development Standards) in its entirety as this is inconsistent with State law. The Ordinance also adds Section 20.66.225 “Mechanical equipment” to shield mechanical equipment from public and private property views.

*e. Removal of Auto Detailing/Carwash as an Allowed Use in certain Specific Plans*

Currently, “auto detailing/carwash” is identified as an allowed use in the following specific plans: SP-19 General Industrial Specific Plan, and SP-10 Pacific Coast Highway Specific Plan. The Ordinance removes reference to such use. Staff would like to note that the City has a “permissive zoning code” meaning that removing the use means that such use is no longer permitted in SP-19 and SP-10.

*f. Increase of Allowable Fence/Wall/Hedge Height*

Permissible height requirements for fences, walls and hedges for commercial or industrial districts is codified in Section 20.20.070 “Fences, walls and hedges” of the SHMC. Currently no fence, wall or hedge over three feet in an industrial district is permitted in any required front yard or in the required street side of a corner lot. The Ordinance proposes to increase the height requirement to six feet.

*g. Clarification of Planning Commission’s Role Concerning Conditional Use Permits*

Section 20.64.060 “Commission hearing-Conduct and determination” of the Zoning Code (Title 20) discusses the Planning Commission’s role in connection with the approval of a conditional use

permit. The proposed Ordinance more accurately describes the Commission's role by clarifying that the Commission provides a recommendation to the City Council for approval of a conditional use permit, and does not render a "decision," as the City Council is the final decision-maker.

*h. Modernization of the Submission of Site Plan and Design Review Application Materials*

Sections 20.52.030 "Review Procedures", and 20.52.040 "Application and submission of Site Plan", relate to the submission of required site plan and design review materials. The proposed Ordinance amends these sections to provide that electronic submittal of such information is preferred but not required, and to simplify the format and submission of required information.

## **II. General Welfare, Public Peace, and Health and Safety**

*a. Bolstering Shopping Cart Ordinance*

To better mitigate the issue of abandoned shopping carts on public and private property, the City is bolstering its existing regulations concerning abandoned shopping carts codified in Chapter 8.54 of Title 8 (Health and Safety) of the SHMC. The proposed Ordinance repeals and replaces the entirety of Chapter 8.54 to, in part, adopt more stringent requirements applicable to business owners managing and retrieving their shopping carts and broaden the definition of "abandoned shopping carts" to clarify the types of shopping carts and circumstances which warrant removal by the City.

*b. Prohibiting Smoking in Public Parks and Places*

The Ordinance proposes to amend Section 9.08.010 "Acts prohibited in public parks and enclosures-Permits required for certain acts" of Chapter 9.08 (Conduct in Public Places of Title 9 (Public Peace, Morals and Welfare) to prohibit "smoking" in any "park" or "public place" as defined therein.

*c. Organized Sports Games and Practices*

The Ordinance proposes an additional change to Section 9.08.010 "Acts prohibited in public parks and enclosures-Permits required for certain acts" in connection with organized sports games and practices. The change clarifies that organized sports games and practices are prohibited within any public park or other public property, including the "public right of way" as defined therein, without a written permit from the Parks, Recreation and Library Services Director.

*d. Regulating Adult Businesses in the City*

This Ordinance proposes to amend the City's existing regulations concerning "Adult Business" codified in Chapter 9.64, of Title 9 (Public Peace, Morals and Welfare) to bolster the same. The ordinance requires "performers" (as defined) to obtain a license from the City in order to be employed or otherwise retained by an adult business for work as a performer. This change also establishes performer license application requirements, establishes new regulations related to adult business operations and inspections, and amends the parking requirements for specified adult businesses.

## **III. Public Streets and Parking Regulations**

The SHMC currently provides that subject to certain exceptions, only oversized vehicles or trailers for which an oversized parking permit has been issued may park upon a public street or highway in the City. Exceptions from the foregoing are codified in Section 10.30.030 of Chapter 10.30 (Oversized Vehicles, Trailers, and Campers) of Title 10 (Vehicles and Traffic). The Ordinance proposes clarifying

two categories of commercial vehicles that are exempt: (i) those engaged in the active loading and unloading of goods subject to a specified period of time; and (2) those engaged in the performance of a service, including but not limited to pool care, for which additional time is necessary and reasonable to complete said service.

The Ordinance also requires obtaining an encroachment permit in connection with encroachments caused by excavation or construction activities. (Sections 12.08.010 and 12.08.020). Similar to excavation permits, this requirement is not applicable to encroachments associated with activity performed pursuant to contracts awarded by the City.

#### **IV. Miscellaneous**

The Ordinance proposes certain changes to Title 1 (General Provisions) of the SHMC to: (i) update its requirement concerning the posting of public notices to lessen the amount of places in which posting of public notices are required to be posted (Section 1.08.010); (ii) modernize the means by which notices required under the SHMC may be provided by including electronic delivery (Section 1.08.020); (iii) clarify existing noticing requirements to cite to relevant state law (Section 1.08.030); (iv) replace references to “city treasurer” with “City’s Finance Department” in connection with the receipt of funds (Section 1.12.030); (v) remove unnecessary language concerning the terms of Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation commissioners (Sections 2.32.050 and 2.36.050); (vi) allow for the exclusion of persons from the library under certain circumstances (Sections 2.88.030 and 2.88.040); and (vii) clarify rules and regulations concerning access to the library, its premises resources and services (Section 2.88.060).

Lastly, the Ordinance proposes to amend Section 21.28.030 concerning development impact fees, to require the payment of development impact fees on the date of the issuance of necessary building permits from the City, rather than upon the later occurrence of a final inspection or issuance of certificate of occupancy.

#### **CEQA Categorical Exemption**

The Ordinance is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), because the Ordinance does not qualify as a “project” under CEQA as defined in Section 15378.” (State CEQA Guidelines, § 15060(c).) Here, the Ordinance does not qualify as a “project” because it does not have the potential of “resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.” (State CEQA Guidelines, § 15378(a).) The proposed Ordinance does not authorize or directly result in any physical development or changes to the environment. Instead, the Ordinance is creating regulatory schemes for activities that are already allowed under state law and is otherwise amending provisions of the Municipal Code for purposes of clarity, to remove redundant or unnecessary terms, and to modernize and update regulations to conform with state law. Further, Section 15378 explicitly excludes from the definition of “project”, “[o]rganizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.” (State CEQA Guidelines, § 15378(b)(5).) Even if the proposed Ordinance was considered a “project” subject to CEQA, it would qualify for the “common sense exemption” set forth in State CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3), which exempts activity from CEQA where “it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment”. The Ordinance will not result in any development or in any new activity with the potential to impact the environment. The City Clerk shall cause a Notice of Exemption to be filed as authorized by CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

Reviewed for Fiscal Impact:

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12/9/2025

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Siamlu Cox  
Administrative Services Officer/Finance Director

Attachments:

- A. Ordinance - Clean
- B. Ordinance - Redline