

RESOLUTION NO. XXX-08-19

**AN RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF
THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA,
RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF
ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT 25-01, AMENDING
CHAPTERS 20.10 “RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS” AND 20.20
“COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS” OF TITLE 20 “ZONING” OF
THE SIGNAL HILL MUNICIPAL CODE TO REGULATE
PERMEABLE HARDSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE
MATERIALS; AND FINDING SAID ACTION EXEMPT FROM
THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT**

WHEREAS, the City of Signal Hill, California (“City”) is a municipal corporation, duly organized under the California Constitution and laws of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the police powers delegated to it by Article XI, Section 7 of the California Constitution, the City has the authority to enact laws which promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizens, that are not conflict with general law; and

WHEREAS, given the legacy of oil operations in and around the City, the City has the potential for the presence of concentrations of methane gas; and

WHEREAS, methane gas can rise up from the subsurface, accumulate, and present a fire hazard if pressurized; and

WHEREAS, under the Signal Hill Municipal Code (SHMC), a methane assessment is required for all proposed property development; and

WHEREAS, the results of the methane assessment may require methane mitigation, which is also required for all properties with development proposed over, or in close proximity to, abandoned wells; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to SHMC Section 20.46.100(J), in the Town Center Northwest Specific Plan (SP-24), any deviation or change out of hardscape and landscape materials requires administrative review and approval before installation of such materials, to ensure methane mitigation is maintained; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to similarly regulate changes to hardscape and landscape materials in the City's residential and commercial zones, including Specific Plans, and to require a certain level of permeability for hardscaped and landscaped materials on such properties or development sites within the City; and

WHEREAS, on July 25, 2025, notice of a Planning Commission public hearing regarding the proposed project was published in the Signal Tribune newspaper; and was posted in accordance with SHMC Section 1.08.010; and

WHEREAS, on August 19, 2025, a public hearing was held before the Planning Commission, and all interested parties were given an opportunity to be heard regarding the proposed project; and

WHEREAS, based upon Staff's review and assessment, the proposed ordinance is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines, section 15601 (b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption) of the State CEQA Guidelines (Chapter 3 of Division 6 of the California Code of Regulations); and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission of the City of Signal Hill, California, does hereby recommend City Council approval of Zoning Ordinance Amendment 25-01, as follows:

Section 1. The recitals set forth above are true and correct and are hereby adopted as findings in support of this Resolution as if fully set forth herein.

Section 2. Section 20.10.072 entitled, "Landscape materials and turf replacement" of Chapter 20.10 entitled, "Residential Districts," of the SHMC is hereby amended to add the following language in underline:

20.10.072 Landscape materials and turf replacement.

A. Maximum Percent Hardscape Area. With the exception of the established driveway allowance, the maximum area of hardscape material (permeable or non-permeable) within the front setback shall be limited to ~~twenty-five~~ fifty percent of the setback area (includes walkways, patios and courtyards, but excludes driveways). Of the foregoing allowed maximum area of hardscape material in the front setback area, non-permeable materials, such as, but not limited to artificial turf, is limited to twenty-five percent of the setback area.

1. Area of front setback - area of required driveway = remaining front setback area.
2. Remaining front setback area x ~~twenty-five~~ fifty percent = total allowed hardscape area.

B. Driveway Allowance. Driveways serving required garages or providing on-site parking (for properties without garages) are excluded from the maximum allowed ~~twenty-five~~ fifty percent of hardscape material in front yard setbacks.

Driveway Allowance is based on required garage capacity and size	
Garage Capacity	Driveway Allowance
0 - 1 car garage	10' (max. width)
2 car garage	20' (max. width)
3 or more car garage	30' (max. width)

C. Turf in New Development. Turf in new development is subject to Chapter 13.10.

D. Turf Replacement.

1. Turf is not a required or preferred landscape material. Drought tolerant landscape materials that retain water on site are strongly encouraged when replacing existing turf.
2. Turf replacement in landscape areas of two thousand five hundred square feet or greater is subject to Chapter 13.10.
3. Artificial turf is considered a non-permeable material.

E. Permeable Area.

1. Residential Districts: RL, RLM-1, and RLM-2 :

- i) A minimum of fifty percent of the lot area shall be permeable hardscape material, permeable landscape material, or a combination of both.
- ii) Every structure or building on a property or development site shall maintain a border on three of the four sides of such structure or building with permeable hardscape material, permeable landscape material, or a combination of both, which, with the exception of the allowance for a non-permeable path from the rear yard access, is contiguous on three sides and which extends twenty-four inches in width from the base of such structure or building and measures at least four feet in length.
- iii) A property or development site that has City-approved vent boxes installed for methane mitigation may be exempt from the requirements of Subparagraph (i) and (ii), above.

2. Residential District: RH

- i) A minimum of fifty percent of the lot area shall be permeable hardscape material, permeable landscape material, or a combination of both.
- ii) Every structure or building on a lot shall maintain a border on three of the four sides of such structure or building with permeable hardscape material, permeable landscape material, or a combination of both, which, with the exception of the allowance for a non-permeable path from the rear yard access, is contiguous on three sides, and which extends twenty-four inches in width from the base of such structure or building and measures at least four feet in length.
- iii) A property or development site that has City-approved vent boxes installed for methane mitigation may be exempt from the requirements of Subparagraph (i) and (ii), above.

F. Vent Box in New Development. New construction of any building or structure and making structural and physical improvements, additions, extensions and exterior alterations to any building or structure requires methane assessment and may require installation of vent boxes for methane mitigation.

G. Any deviation or change out of hardscape materials or landscape materials requires administrative review by the Director, and approval, prior to installation, to ensure the requirements of this Section are met and maximum methane mitigation is maintained.

Section 3. The regulations in Section 2 of this Ordinance (above) shall apply to all specific plans within residential districts of the City, and shall supersede any conflicting regulations in such specific plans, including: the Hilltop Specific Plan (SP-2), the California Crown Specific Plan (SP-5), the Special Purpose Specific Plan (SP-7), the Signal Hill Village Specific Plan (SP-8), the Bixby Ridge Specific Plan (SP-9), the Crescent Heights Historic District Specific Plan (SP-11), the Cherry Avenue Corridor Residential Specific Plan (SP-13), the Hathaway Ridge Residential Specific Plan (SP-

14), the Cityview Residential Specific Plan (SP-15), the Villagio Residential Specific Plan (SP-16), the Crescent Square Residential Specific Plan (SP-17), the Pacificwalk Residential Specific Plan (SP-18), the Freeman Heights Residential Specific Plan (SP-20), the Courtyard Specific Plan (SP-21), the Summerland Residential Specific Plan (SP-22), , and.

Section 4. Section 20.20.055 entitled, "Landscape materials and turf replacement" of Chapter 20.20 entitled, "Commercial Districts," of the Signal Hill Municipal Code is hereby amended to add the following language in underline:

20.20.055 Landscape materials and turf replacement.

A. Maximum Percent Hardscape. Hardscape in front and street side setbacks is limited to driveways and walkways only (hardscape includes paved materials, both permeable and non-permeable). The remaining area shall be landscaped and maintained.

B. Turf in New Development. Turf in new development is subject to Chapter 13.10.

C. Turf Replacement

1. Turf is not a required or preferred landscape material. Drought tolerant landscape materials that retain water on site are strongly encouraged when replacing existing turf.
2. Turf replacement in landscape areas of two thousand five hundred square feet or greater is subject to Chapter 13.10.
3. Artificial turf is considered a non-permeable material.

D. Permeable Area.

1. A minimum of fifty percent of the lot area shall be permeable hardscape material, permeable landscape material, or a combination of both.

2. Every structure or building on a property or development site shall maintain a border on three of the four sides of such structure or building with permeable hardscape material, permeable landscape material, or a combination of both, which, with the exception of the allowance for a non-permeable path from the rear yard access, is contiguous on three sides and which extends twenty-four inches in width from the base of such structure or building and measures at least four feet in length.

3. A lot that has City-approved vent boxes installed for methane mitigation may be exempt from the requirements of Subparagraph (1) and (2), above.

E. Vent Box in New Development. New construction of any building or structure and making structural and physical improvements, additions, extensions and exterior

alterations to any building or structure requires methane assessment and may require installation of vent boxes for methane mitigation.

F. Any deviation or change out of hardscape materials or landscape materials requires administrative review by the Director and approval, prior to installation, to ensure the requirements of this Section are met and maximum methane mitigation is maintained.

Section 5. The regulations in Section 4 of this Ordinance (above) shall apply to all specific plans within commercial districts of the City, and shall supersede any conflicting regulations in such specific plans, including: the Town Center East Specific Plan (SP-1), the Town Center West Specific Plan (SP-3), Auto Center Specific Plan (SP-4), the Commercial Corridor Specific Plan (SP-6), the Pacific Coast Highway Specific Plan (SP-10), the Gateway Center North Specific Plan (SP-12), the General Industrial Specific Plan (SP-19), the Heritage Square Central Business District Specific Plan (SP-23), the Town Center Northwest Specific Plan (SP-24), and the American University of Health Sciences and the American University Research Academy (AUHS/AURA) Specific Plan (SP-25).

Section 6. If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance or the application thereof to any entity, person or circumstance is held for any reason to be invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Ordinance are severable. The Planning Commission of the City of Signal Hill hereby declares that it would have adopted this Resolution and each section, sentence, clause or phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more section, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

Section 7. The Planning Commission hereby determines that this Ordinance is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), because pursuant to State CEQA Regulation 15307 (14 Cal. Code Regs., § 15307), this Ordinance is covered by the CEQA Categorical Exemption for actions taken to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of a natural resource where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. The adoption of this Ordinance will result in the enhancement and protection of land and water resources in the City, and will not result in cumulative adverse environment impacts. It is therefore exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

Section 8. This Ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days following its adoption by the City Council.

Section 9. The City Clerk shall certify the adoption of this Ordinance. Not later than fifteen (15) days following the passage of this Ordinance, the Ordinance, or a summary thereof, along with the names of the City Council members voting for and against the Ordinance, shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the City.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission on this 19th day of August, 2025.

SAEIDA MILLER
CHAIR

ATTEST:

COLLEEN T. DOAN
COMMISSION SECRETARY

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES) ss.
CITY OF SIGNAL HILL)

I, COLLEEN T. DOAN, Secretary for the Planning Commission of the City of Signal Hill, California, do hereby certify that Resolution No. XXX-08-19 was adopted at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Signal Hill on the 19th day of August 2025, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

COLLEEN T. DOAN
COMMISSION SECRETARY