

April 28, 2014

Honorable City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
2.00 North Spring Street, Room 395 Los Angeles, CA, 90012.

Dear City Council members,

The small lot ordinance was enacted to ease the housing crisis in Los Angeles and bring affordable housing to the citizens of Los Angeles.

Many small lot developments have been built, with many more planned. These developments have achieved various levels of success and integration into the neighborhoods, enhancing the neighborhoods they inhabit as well as adhering to the spirit of the small lot ordinance.

Many more of these projects do nothing more than reduce the affordable housing stock of the city of Los Angeles only to be replaced by dense, expensive housing which serves no one but the financial interests of the developers. Often these developments displace rent-controlled housing.

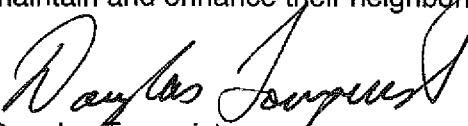
The housing crisis of Los Angeles (recently labeled America's least affordable rental market) will not be solved by building more housing priced well above the median price of this region.

This motion to allow by-right subdivision does nothing for the stakeholders of this city and brings more power to those with who already have substantial advantages. As it stands now, the process of subdivision allows for significant stakeholder comment, input and involvement as infill development changes the character of long-standing neighborhoods. It allows change to occur in a way that benefits all, stakeholder and developer alike.

Tom LaBonge asked the Department of City Planning to evaluate the ordinance and ensure "compatibility with the neighborhood." He addressed the problems of the small lot ordinance from the stakeholder's perspective, not that of the developers. He called for the Guidelines to be updated and improved. At this date the guidelines are unenforceable, all too often enhanced by "flexibility" and "creativity" to the point of distortion and flagrant disregard.

The South Hollywood neighborhood council clearly enumerates problems precipitated by this well-meaning ordinance - disregard for the guidelines, out of scale buildings, towering structures, entire neighborhoods blighted by one large building whose only benefit has been to enhance the bottom line of its developer.

Until such time as problems such as these can be addressed, the subdivision process must not be changed, further removing any chance for the stakeholders to work with the developers to maintain and enhance their neighborhoods


Douglas Tornquist
Dtornquist@mac.com

29 April 2014

Subject: Council File 13-1478

To: Planning and Land Use Management Committee
Honorable Jose Huizar, Chair
c/o Office of the City Clerk
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Honorable Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Council Member Tom LaBonge filed motion 13-1478 on November 1st last year, proposing to update current Small Lot Development guidelines and impose stricter rules in light of problems and complaints from neighbors. His Chief of Land Use Planning, Rene Weitzer, was quoted: "There is a need for real conditions to be imposed on the projects." She went on to say: "Under LaBonge's motion, the Planning Department would evaluate and look at possibly changing the underlying ordinance to ensure that future Small Lot Subdivisions are compatible with the neighborhoods."

Item (6) 13-1478 on the agenda, a proposed change to the Small Lot Ordinance, seeks to remove the requirement for developers to obtain a variance in order to start construction prior to the State of California recording the Final Subdivision Map. Even though a Subdivisions Hearing would still be mandated before developers can get approval for their projects, they would now be able to bypass the collaborative Neighborhood Council review process triggered by the variance.

Without the need to obtain a variance, developers would not be required to solicit input or review from Neighborhood Councils. Surrounding neighbors often are in complete shock that such developments are (1) legal and (2) already in the planning process by the time they are informed. Residents are then further dismayed that developers are not required to follow the Small Lot Subdivision Guidelines. Even though the Guidelines clearly address issues such as neighborhood character, sizing, setbacks, privacy, open space, and street orientation, they are routinely ignored by developers because they are not mandatory. The current review process has proven to be invaluable, as described by the Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council's Community Impact Statement, dated 3 February 2014.

But what is most disturbing is the fact that Tom LaBonge's motion to protect our neighborhoods is apparently being hijacked to streamline the planning process for developers. Taking away the opportunity for community input is a step in the wrong direction as described by the South Hollywood Neighborhood Association's letter of protest dated 4 April 2014.

In light of complaints and problems that the small lot ordinance has already created, the absolute worst thing would be to now allow these projects to move forward with less review. I therefore urge the PLUM Committee to reject the proposed changes to the ordinance if for no other reason than because it is a blatant attempt to undermine the spirit of the motion.

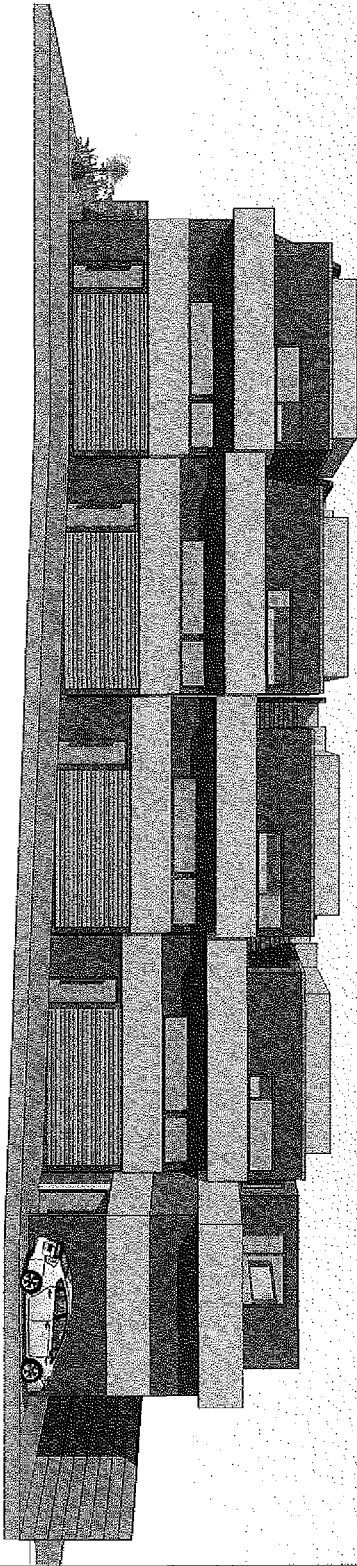
I also request that the Small Lot Ordinance be revised and updated immediately, as called for in Tom LaBonge's Motion 13-1478. Lastly, the Small Lot Design Guidelines must be enforceable as law.

Sincerely,

David Modern, Silver Lake Neighborhood Council Member At Large - Elect

Exhibit A
Before Neighborhood Council
Involvement

853 HYPERION AVE
SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION



**SUNIA
HOMES**
615 BERNARD AVE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90026
SUNIAHOMES.COM

RESIDENCE
HYPERION AVE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90039

COVER

853 HYPERION AVE, LOS ANGELES 90039

SUNIA

CVR

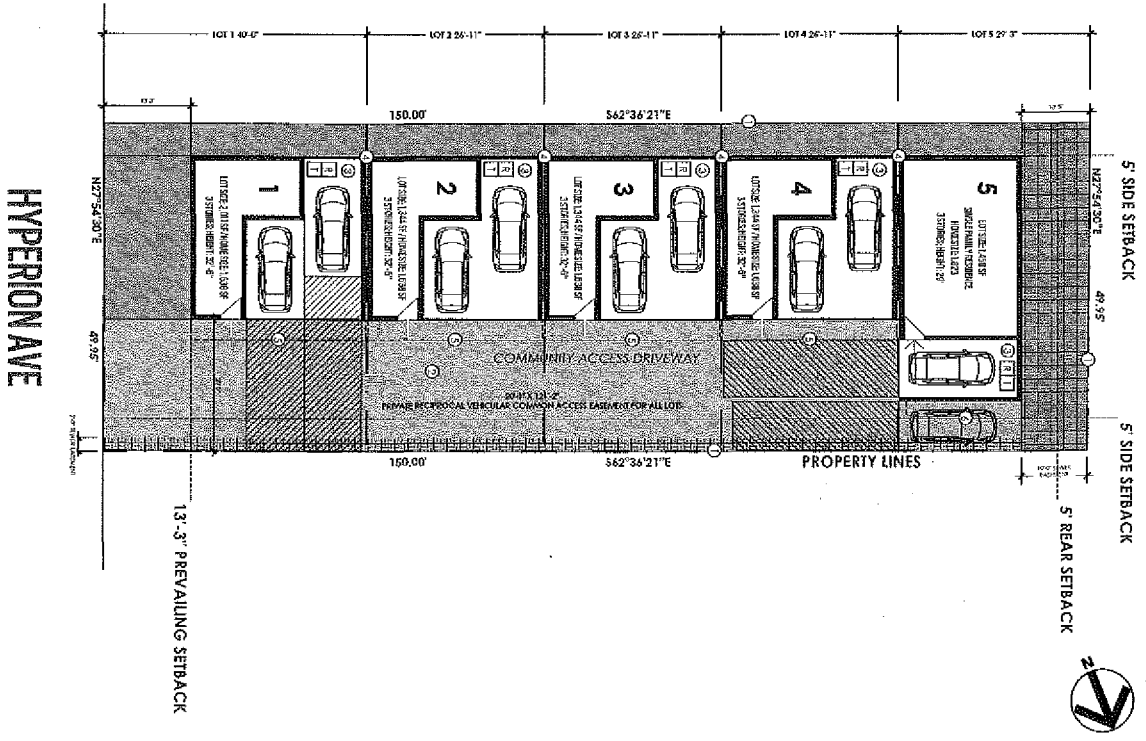
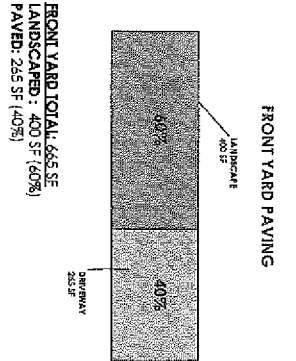
SETBACK MATRIX			
LOT	FRONT	REAR	W/ST
1	20'-0"	9'-0"	0'-2"
2	20'-0"	9'-0"	0'-2"
3	20'-0"	9'-0"	0'-2"
4	20'-0"	9'-0"	0'-2"
5	7'-6"	5'-0"	10'-0"

DENSITY (R3)	
ALLOWABLE	9+ UNITS
PROPOSED	5 UNITS

PIN Number 144A201 304
 Lot/Parcel Area (Collected) 7,478.1 (sq ft)
 Thomas Brothers Grant PACE 314 - GRD 88
 Tied LINCOLUMN HEIGHTS
 Map Reference M. 8 19-70
 Block C
 Lot 4
 Afb (Lot C Reference) None
 Map Sheet 144A201

Community Plan Area Silver Lake - Echo Park - Byron Valley
 Area Designation Medium Density Residential
 Neighborhood Council Silver Lake
 Council District CD 13 - Which Of/renail
 Census Tract # 139201
 LABS District Office Los Angeles Metro

Special Notes None
Zoning R3-1V
Zoning Information (Z) None
General Plan Medium Residential
General Plan Forecasted Yes
Hillside Area Zoning Code Yes
Basinwide Hillside Ordinance No
Basinwide Maintenance Ordinance No
Special Use / Zoning Name
Design Review Board No
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone No
Other Historic Designations None
Other Historic Survey Information None
Mill Act Certified None
RDP - Federation Oriented District None
CDO - Community Design Overlay None



SMALL LOT SINGLE FAMILY SUBDIVISION IN
 AND SECOND PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE
 NO. 176394

NOTES
 DIMENSIONS - ALL EXTERIOR BUILDING
 DIMENSIONS TO FACE OF FINISH. ALL SITE
 DIMENSIONS ARE TO PROPERTY LINE OR
 FACE OF CURB, UNLESS STATED
 OTHERWISE.
RASH COLLECTION - EACH LOT WILL
 HAVE A RASH COLLECTION SYSTEM
 FINISHED ON THE PLANS. RESIDENTS WILL
 PLACE CONTAINERS ON THE STREET FOR
 COLLECTION.
PARKING - EACH LOT IS ACCESSED VIA A
 COMMUNITY ACCESS DRIVEWAY. SEE
 SECTION AND DRAWING FOR LOCATION
 AND DIMENSIONS OF PARKING STALLS.
LANDSCAPING - SEE SHEET A4 FOR
 LANDSCAPE PLANS.

KEYNOTES
 1. WOOD FENCE - MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 6'-0"
 2. CONCRETE DRIVEWAY
 3. WASTE COLLECTION AREA - FOR TRASH
 AND RECYCLING BINS
 4. GAP BETWEEN BUILDINGS - 4'
 5. OVERHANG HOUSE 1, 4 - 3 OVERHANG
 ON THIRD FLOOR TO THE NORTH
 6. OVERHANG HOUSE 5 - 2'-5" OVERHANG
 ON THIRD FLOOR TO THE NORTH

SQUARE FOOTAGE OF HOMES
HOUSES 1, 4
 FIRST FLOOR: 297 SF
 SECOND FLOOR: 665 SF
 THIRD FLOOR: 678 SF + 25 SF BALCONY
 TOTAL: 1,640 SF
HOUSES 2, 3
 FIRST FLOOR: 297 SF
 SECOND FLOOR: 665 SF
 THIRD FLOOR: 678 SF + 25 SF BALCONY
 TOTAL: 1,640 SF + 150 SF DESCENDING
HOUSES 5
 FIRST FLOOR: 524 SF
 SECOND FLOOR: 700 SF
 THIRD FLOOR: 697 SF + 150 SF BALCONY
 GARAGE: 142 SF
 TOTAL: 1,863 SF + 150 SF DESCENDING
BUILDING HEIGHT 32'-0"
ALLOWABLE BUILDING HEIGHT 45'

PARKING
LOTS 1, 4
 STANDARD: 18 x 8-9' (BACKUP: 28-47)
 COMPACT: 15 x 8-10' (BACKUP: 20-37)
LOT 5
 STANDARD: 18 x 8-9' (BACKUP: 24-47)
 COMPACT: 15 x 7-9' (BACKUP: 25-47)

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

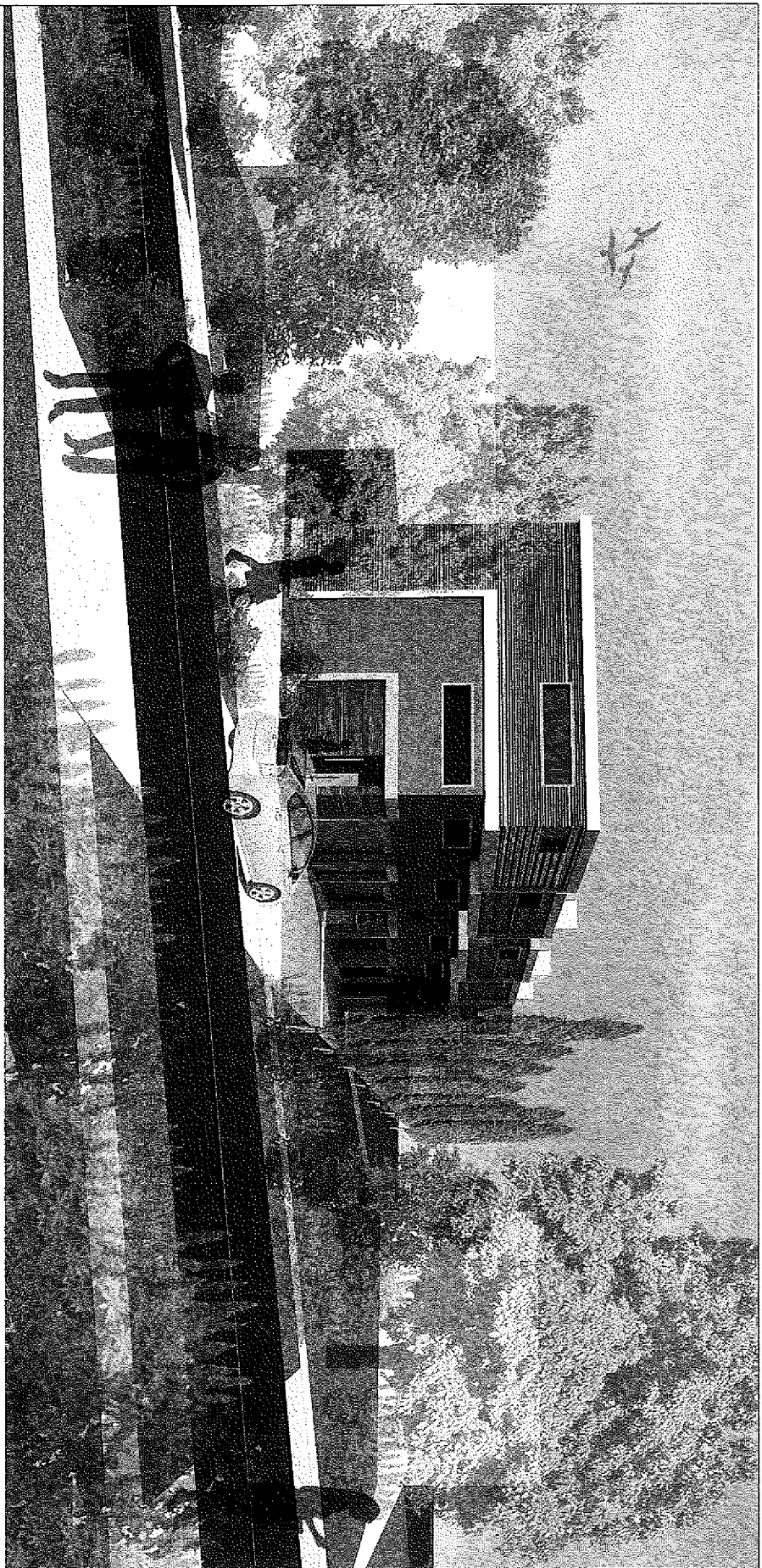
SUNIA HOMES
 915 ROBERTS AVE
 LOS ANGELES, CA 90026
 (310) 440-1111
 SUNIAHOMES.COM

RESOLUTION
 HYPERION PROJECT, LLC
 6220 WILLOW BLVD, SUITE 100
 LOS ANGELES, CA 90048

SITE PLAN
 853 HYPERION AVE, LOS ANGELES 90038

REVISIONS
 A1

Exhibit B
After Neighborhood Council
Involvement



853 HYPERION AVE
SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION

SILVER LAKE URBAN DESIGN & PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (UD&PAC)

853 Hyperion

Discussion Topics – 01/15/2014

Introduction:

- During our first presentation to the Silver Lake UD&PAC in November, we received great feedback from neighbors, tenants, council members and other stakeholders. During the meeting we understood that different people had different concerns: parking, street orientation, noise, storage, height, and privacy – all things we took into account as we explored where we could modify our designs.
- We wanted to go one step further and truly understand what the top priorities were for those immediate neighbors who made their own presentation. Each have their own priorities, so we knocked on their doors to have a further conversation and dialogue to better understand exactly where we could make meaningful alterations that would be a win-win.
- The feedback we received was incorporated into our redesign where feasible, and we made the following series of updates and modifications to the plans to address stakeholder comments:

MODIFICATIONS / REDESIGN

Modification 1: Guest Parking Space between Homes 2 and 3 – now 20% above parking requirements

- Note the most common concern from neighbors is parking. While we are within code as we have 10 spaces for 5 homes and we would not be required to add more than 2 spaces per home until we reached 10 homes, we do understand the challenges with parking on Hyperion and we do sympathize with our neighbors on this topic.
- To accommodate more parking, we created a space between homes 2 and 3, allowing for two guest parking spots, putting us 20% over code requirements
- This space also allows for a break in the homes to shine more ambient light through to our neighbor to the south, which was a concern of hers. We purposely choose the space between homes and 2 and 3 because this is where it would have the most dramatic impact for her.
- This space also breaks up the architectural plane, which we were asked to do in the last UD&PAC meeting

Modification 2: 25% less Roof Decks

- To help mitigate the noise and height concerns, we eliminated the roof deck from the home closest to Hyperion. We have removed it so now only 3 of the 5 homes have roof decks, which will reduce the noise effects and help to mitigate privacy concerns.
- As this is also the highest house, this will also reduce the height slightly
- Finally, it will make this front house less imposing from a street orientation standpoint

Modification 3: Roof Deck Reorientation

- In addition to eliminating a roof deck, we reworked our roof deck plans to provide more buffer with neighboring properties

Modification 4: Street Orientation

- There were concerns about street orientation that we worked on. At the first council meeting, home #1 that faced Hyperion previously had a front door on the lane. We have re-orientated that door and path to face Hyperion, and we have reworked the facade and vegetation to give it a true frontage.
- We effectively created a more welcoming arrival experience and designed a more engaging and warmer front facade with materials and windows.
- Furthermore, by removing the roof deck it gives it a less imposing presence and more street friendly orientation, and helped to mitigate noise and privacy concerns.

Modification 5: Floorplan Reversal

- A common concern was privacy – since these are 3 story structures and we had living and dining on the top floor, there were concerns that owners daily activities in their living and dining area would be looking down on neighbors. To mitigate these challenges we have now put the living and dining on the second floor and the bedrooms on the top floor
- This floor plan reversal also makes it likelier that people won't use their roof decks as much now that they have to take food up two stories and through a level of bedrooms to get to the roof deck. Frankly, it's one of the reasons we liked the living on the top floor so there was quick and easy access to the roof decks, but we understand the concerns and are willing to make adaptations.

Modification 6: All 3 bedrooms on Same Floor

- Previously we had a bedroom on the bottom floor and two other bedrooms on the second floor. Given that we feel our target market are either young families or those that are about to have a family, we redesigned the bedroom configuration so they are all on one floor – making this a more family friendly layout, and less friendly for the frat style living that some neighbors noted as a concern.
- Furthermore, our intent is to make these very nice homes in terms of finishes and spaces. We don't believe they will be conducive to renters, and investors / landlords will be drawn to the better economics that an apartment building rental will provide given the price to rent spread.

Modification 7: Storage Plan

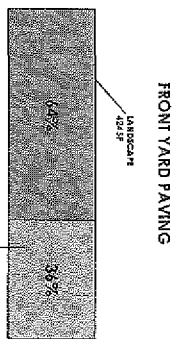
- Someone brought up the concern that if we didn't have enough storage, owners would be forced to use their garages as storage and then would park on the street.
- Our storage plan stems from the fact that we designed the homes as though we might live in them with our kids – so we believe storage is paramount. We have storage in the garage for bigger items / sporting goods, under the stairs, we have considerable cabinet space in the kitchen and we will have big closets and walk in closets. Furthermore, the office / flex space can be used for additional storage.

PIN Number 1444201 394
 Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated) 7,478.136 HJ
 Thomas Brothers Grid Face 594 - GRID B4
 Assessor's Parcel No. 024-001-004
 7441-001-004
 Map Reference at R 1870
 Block C
 Lot 4
 APN (Lot/Cd Reference) None
 Map Sheet 1444201

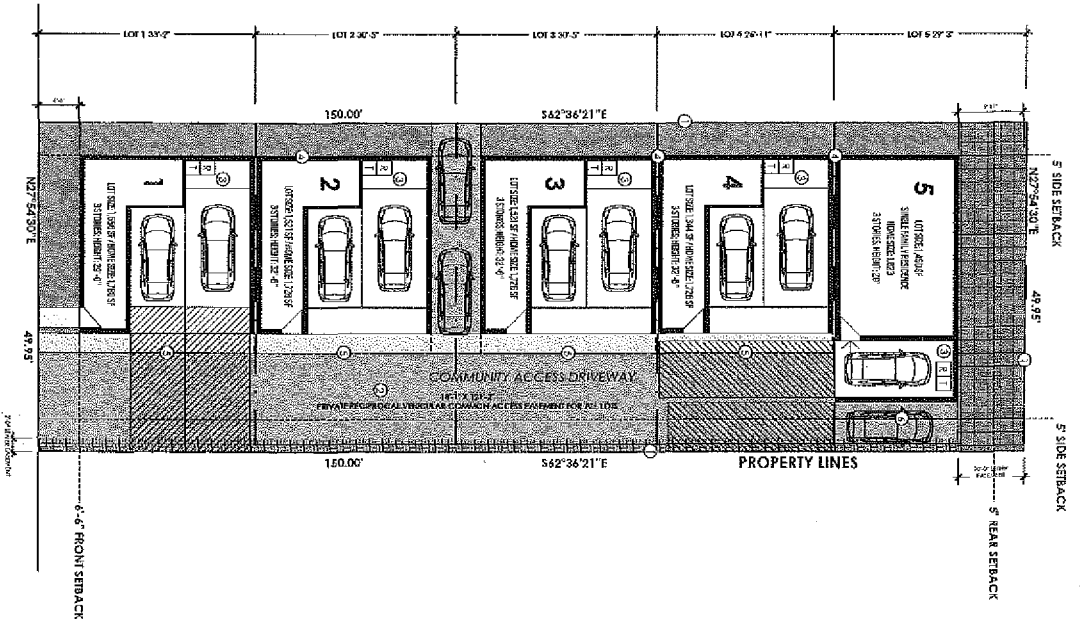
Community Plan Area Silver Lake-Echo Park - Division Valley
 Agency Planning Council Silver Lake
 Council District CD 13 - Michl Ofretel
 Census Tract # 1999201
 LADBS District Office Los Angeles Metro

Special Notes None
 Zoning (S-V) None
 Zoning (R-1) None
 General Plan (G.P.) None
 General Plan (G.P.) None
 Hillside Area (Zoning Code) Yes
 Hillside Area Ordinance No
 Baseline Hillside Ordinance No
 Baseline Monumentation Ordinance No
 Specific Plan Area None
 Special Land Use / Zoning None
 Design Review Board No
 Historic Preservation Overlay Zone No
 Historic Preservation Overlay Zone None
 Other Historic Designations None
 Mills Act Contract None
 POD - Pedestrian Oriented District None
 CPO - Community Design Overlay None

FRONT YARD TOTAL 662 SF
LANDSCAPED: 424 SF (64%)
PAVED: 238 SF (36%)



HYPERION AVE



SETBACK MATRIX				
LOT	FRONT	REAR	WEST	EAST
1	18'-0"	5'-0"	0'-2"	6'-6"
2	18'-0"	5'-0"	3'-9"	0'-2"
3	18'-0"	5'-0"	0'-2"	3'-9"
4	18'-0"	5'-0"	0'-2"	0'-2"
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DENSITY (R3)	
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SITE PLAN