

City Planning Commission
Sacramento, California

Members in Session:

Subject: Zoning Ordinance Amendment relating to Wall regulations.
(M91-012)

Location: Citywide

SUMMARY:

The proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment would amend Section 3 of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to add Section 3.1 relating to Wall regulations. Staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend adoption of the attached Zoning Ordinance Amendment to the City Council.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

At the request of City Councilmember Kastanis and the City Manager's Office, the Planning Division and Public Works Department have been engaged in developing a wall ordinance which would regulate wall design, setback, construction, and maintenance in order to provide quality design of various kinds of walls throughout the city. Several cities and counties throughout California were queried regarding their wall ordinances. The County of Sacramento has a wall ordinance which has been applied on developments throughout the County.

City staff has met with the Building Industry to obtain its input and support for this proposed ordinance. In addition, staff has conferred with Planning Commission members to further define as to which streets the structural criteria should apply. The proposed amendment pertains to walls which are required by the Noise Element of the General Plan, City ordinance, subdivision design, building permit, conditions to a special permit or other land use entitlements. All other design options shall be considered first in protecting residential areas from adverse environmental impacts and walls shall be required only as a last resort.

The amendment defines the visual appearance (brick, concrete, or masonry), height of walls (6 to 8 feet), long term maintenance funding, special permit procedure for any deviation, structural criteria, and landscaping of setbacks.

The visual appearance of a wall shall be in character, scale, and style of the surrounding neighborhood in which it is being constructed. Walls shall be set back 25 feet from the public right

of way if possible and the setback area shall be landscaped with groundcover, shrubs, vines, mounds and trees. Also, an automatic irrigation system shall be required to be installed in the landscaped setback area. The landscaped setback area shall be approved by the City Director of Parks and Community Services.

The height of the walls may be higher than eight feet if a higher wall is required for noise mitigation. A funding method for the maintenance of the wall and landscaped area would need to be submitted and approved by staff before it can be built. In addition, the Planning Director shall have the authority to grant special permits from these proposed requirements.

The Building Industry Association and several Wall contractors have been notified regarding this proposed ordinance. Those wall contractors who use a prefabricated method of wall construction and do not use continuous footings oppose the structural criteria recommendations in the proposed ordinance.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The Environmental Coordinator has determined that the proposed project does not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment and has issued a Negative Declaration without mitigation requirements.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend approval of the attached Zoning Ordinance Amendment and forward to the City Council.

Respectfully Submitted,


Will Weitman
Principal Planner

Report Prepared By,

Doug Holmen
Associate Planner

ORDINANCE NO.
ADOPTED BY THE SACRAMENTO CITY COUNCIL ON DATE OF

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 3.0 OF THE
COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF
SACRAMENTO (ORDINANCE NO. 2550, FOURTH SERIES,
AS AMENDED) RELATING TO THE ADDITION OF
SECTION 3.1 PERTAINING TO WALLS (M91-012)

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SACRAMENTO:

Section 1 Add Section 3.1 WALL REGULATIONS

SECTION 3.1 WALL REGULATIONS

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to provide standards for structural stability and design of walls along public streets and between commercial and residential uses. These standards are intended to eliminate "broken down" walls and eyesores along public streets and improve the overall appearance of the neighborhoods.

B. APPLICATION

1. Walls required by Noise Studies or the Noise Element of the General Plan, City ordinance, subdivision design, building permit, conditions to a special permit or other land use entitlements shall comply with the standards set forth in this section.
2. Walls shall be provided as a requirement of a Final Map and required at the time the building permit is issued.
3. Walls located adjacent to State Department of Transportation (CalTrans) right-of-ways shall utilize the CalTrans soundwall design criteria and the CalTrans standard construction drawings of approved soundwall types. In areas where terrain, grade and access control allow, walls may be constructed within the state right-of-way under a CalTrans encroachment permit.

C. VISUAL APPEARANCE

1. Walls shall be constructed using brick, concrete, or masonry material.
2. The walls appearance shall be in character, scale and style of the surrounding neighborhood. The wall surface shall be easily maintainable.

3. Walls shall be setback a minimum of 25 feet from the public right of way if possible.
4. Setback areas shall be landscaped with groundcover, shrubs, vines, mounds and trees. An automatic irrigation system shall be installed in the landscaped setback area. The landscaped setback area shall be approved by the City Director of Parks and Community Services.

D. HEIGHT

1. Walls shall have a minimum height of 6'0" above the adjacent finished grade. In computing the minimum height where the finished grades differ on each side of the wall (the wall is also used as a soil retaining structure), the wall height shall be measured from the higher adjacent finished grade.
2. Walls shall have a maximum height of 8'0" above the adjacent finished grade. In computing the maximum height locations where the finished grades differ on each side of the wall (the wall is used as a soil retaining structure), the wall height shall be measured from the lower adjacent finished grade.
3. Notwithstanding Sections D-1 and D-2, wall heights that are determined as part of studies (noise analysis, visual impact, etc.) required by the City shall be incorporated into the wall design. Walls required to be greater than 8'0" in height shall be constructed utilizing soil mounding to reduce the apparent height (10 foot high wall equals 8 foot wall with a 2 foot mound).
4. Walls over six feet in height as required by noise studies or the noise element of the General Plan shall not require a variance.

E. STRUCTURAL CRITERIA

Walls shall be designed and constructed in accordance with either Section E-1-a or E-1-b and shall only apply to the major streets as identified on the Major Street's Plan (Map 3) in the Circulation Element of the Sacramento General Plan (Exhibit A):

1. Walls shall be designed in accordance with the applicable sections of the current Uniform Building Code (including, but not limited to, wind or seismic, and soil loadings), with the following requirements:
 - a. The permit exemption specified in Section 301(b)2 of the Uniform Building Code is

amended to read: "Fences not over 5 feet 11 inches high."

- b. Walls shall have a minimum 12" deep x 18" wide portland cement concrete continuous footing or grade beam;
 - c. Walls shall have a minimum thickness of 6";
 - d. Precast panel walls shall utilize a minimum panel height of 4'0" for each wall section; and
 - e. Wood framed walls shall not be utilized;
2. Walls may be designed to meet CalTrans soundwall design criteria which meet or exceed the base stated standards and are acceptable as an alternative soundwall type.

F. LONG TERM MAINTENANCE FUNDING

A funding method to provide for the long term, ongoing maintenance of the wall and landscaped area shall be submitted to, and approved by the City.

G. SPECIAL PERMIT PROCEDURE

The Director of the Planning Division shall have the authority to issue special permits to allow applicants to deviate from the requirements set forth in this section and shall be the same as Section 15 of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. No special permit shall be required if a height greater than 8 feet is required by environmental noise analysis.

DATE PASSED FOR PUBLICATION:

DATE ENACTED:

DATE EFFECTIVE:

MAYOR

ATTEST:

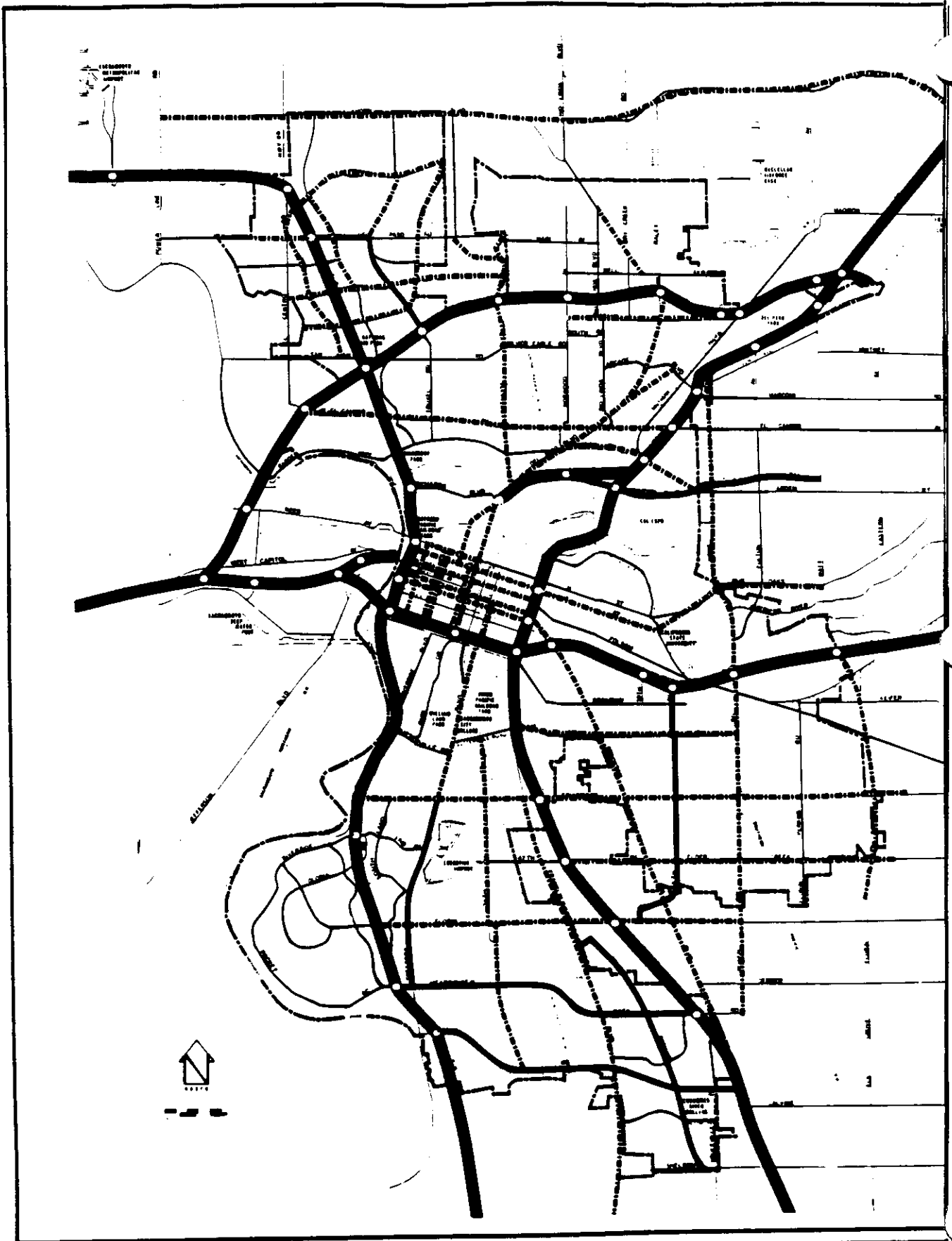
CITY CLERK

M91-012

APPLC. NO. M91-012

MEETING DATE: August 22, 1991

ITEM NO. 9



MAJOR STREETS PLAN



FREEWAYS



ARTERIALS



EXPRESSWAYS



MINOR ARTERIALS