

CONCEPTUAL SUMMARY

BACKYARD BEEKEEPING

BACKGROUND

With increasing concern for the health of our bee population, and the impact on plant pollination, and therefore on our food system, there has been an increase in interest locally and across the country in "backyard beekeeping". While beekeeping (apiaries) is allowed by-right in Agricultural zones in the City of Los Angeles, it is not currently allowed in residential zones. Allowing backyard beekeeping in residential zones would help support the bee population and our food system, while ensuring, through regulations and guidelines, the health of bee colonies in the hives, as well as the safety and health of neighboring residents.

The City Council Motion (Council File No. 12-0785) directed the Department of City Planning and the Department of Animal Services to report back on the feasibility of beekeeping in R zones. Since introduction of the Council Motion, the Planning Department has been in communication with Animal Services and Building and Safety, as well as Council offices and has begun preparation of a draft ordinance to allow beekeeping in single-family residential zones (R1, RS, RE9, RE11, RE15, RA, RE20, and RE40).

Planning staff have researched other cities' beekeeping ordinances for model regulations of beekeeping in single-family neighborhoods. Staff have also consulted with planning staff at the City of Santa Monica about the success of their beekeeping ordinance, and reviewed beekeeping ordinances in several other cities, including those that Santa Monica's ordinance is based upon. This proposed ordinance is based on other cities' adopted and successful ordinances, and on suggestions from beekeeping stakeholders.

This preliminary concept is for a proposed ordinance that would regulate beekeeping as an accessory use in single-family neighborhoods through basic maximum hive number, distancing, barrier, and hive positioning requirements, and would be accompanied by a set of guidelines suggesting other model beekeeping practices.



CONCEPTUAL REGULATIONS

- The applicant would be registered as a beekeeper with the County of Los Angeles.
- The number of hives would be limited to two per lot.
- Hives would be located in the front yard setback, and a minimum of 5 feet from all lot lines and 20 feet from any public-right-of-way would be required.
- Hive entrances would be required to face away from, or parallel to, the nearest lot lines.
- A barrier of 6 feet would be required between hives and all adjacent lots, in the form of a wall or vegetative barrier, or hives shall be placed a minimum of 8 feet above the ground level of the adjacent lot.

CONCEPTUAL GUIDELINES

- All bee colonies should be kept in inspectable hives consisting of movable frames and combs.
- Hives should be kept in sound and usable condition at all times.
- Hives should be continually managed to provide adequate living-space for their resident bees to prevent swarming.
- Hives should be re-queened at least once every two years to prevent swarming.
- A water source for bees should be provided at all times on the property where the bees are kept to discourage bee visitation at swimming pools, hose bibs and other water sources on adjacent public or private property.
- Hive maintenance materials or equipment should be stored in a sealed container or placed within a building or other bee-proof enclosure.

POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS

- Colonies of bees exhibit defensive or objectionable behavior, or interfere with the normal use of neighboring.
- Colonies of bees swarm.
- Bees or hives do not conform to this Code.
- Hives become abandoned by resident bees or by owner.

DEFINITIONS FOR LAMC 12.03

"Bee" would mean any stage of the common domestic honey bee, *Apis Mellifera* species.

"Hive" would mean a structure for the housing of a bee colony.

