

FACT SHEET

Wildlife Pilot Study

Summary

Los Angeles City Planning has initiated a Wildlife Pilot Study to better conserve biological resources in the Santa Monica Mountains. The pilot study seeks to establish land use regulations to preserve habitat and wildlife connectivity in the hillsides, minimizing the impact of development which is largely comprised of single-family residential homes, located adjacent to open space. These proposed land use regulations aim to promote habitat connectivity in larger contiguous areas of the hillsides for wildlife and native species. Additionally, the regulations would minimize the disturbance of biological resources where sensitive habitat or wildlife pathways may exist, particularly around waterways, riparian areas, and ridgelines. In lieu of an independent Ridgeline Ordinance, the Wildlife Pilot Study will seek to incorporate and address ridgeline protection.

Background

The Wildlife Pilot Study represents one of Los Angeles's sustainability strategies. This study was initiated with the support of the City Council to help in combating climate change and the loss of biodiversity in Los Angeles, most notably by instituting additional development requirements meant to preserve biological resources, native vegetation, and hillside ecology. As part of this work program, the Department is exploring new zoning tools that could inform and later be applied in other hillside areas.

Key Provisions

This study will identify a set of development regulations—from limitations to future hillside grading, to incorporation of additional setback requirements, to standards for fencing, and height regulations on ridgelines, among other considerations. These



regulations, revised with the public feedback received from Wildlife and Ridgeline efforts, will be described in the revised draft ordinance, which the Department will release in spring, prior to advancing final recommendations to the City Planning Commission (CPC).

Frequently Asked Questions

Why was the Wildlife Pilot Study initiated?

The Wildlife Pilot Study was initiated to preserve biodiversity and wildlife connectivity in the hillsides of Los Angeles. Consistent with sustainability concepts in the City's [Green New Deal pLAN](#), the study is intended to minimize habitat loss and protect against climate change by introducing more sustainable land use strategies.

How is biodiversity a component of planning?

Biodiversity is focused on the interplay between plants, animals, and other species—including, their environment and how they interact with one another. Cities, including Los Angeles, are interested in the design of the built environment as well as the health of the surrounding natural environment. Zoning regulations afford local jurisdictions with the tools to shape development in a way that minimizes harm to the environment and the region's biodiversity.

Will the Wildlife Pilot Study regulate the ridgelines?

As potential corridors for wildlife mobility, ridgelines are considered an important resource under the proposed Wildlife Pilot Study. The ordinance will outline development protections for Los Angeles's ridgelines, including potential standards as it relates to the scale and visual prominence of future projects along ridgelines. By consolidating ridgeline protection efforts into the Wildlife Pilot Study, City Planning will be incorporating the ecological, biological, and environmental resources currently analyzed under both ordinances and apply them uniformly across Los Angeles's ridgelines and Wildlife Pilot Study area. As opposed to having two separate ordinances, the revised ridgeline protections are being folded into the Wildlife Pilot Study and



advanced by a single ordinance. This approach will ensure a more efficient set of regulations within a similar geography without duplicating efforts.

What is the next opportunity for public feedback?

The Department will hold a public hearing later this spring to solicit public comment on the revised ordinance. Subsequent opportunities for community input will be provided when the ordinance is advanced to the City Planning Commission (CPC) and later the Planning & Land Use Management Committee and City Council for consideration.

When is the study anticipated to be completed?

The Department is working toward the goal of advancing the ordinance to the CPC in 2022. Following CPC, the ordinance will need to be scheduled for consideration by the full City Council. To stay informed, [sign up online](#) to receive email updates.

How will other areas of the City benefit from this study?

Other hillsides in the city may benefit from these or similar proposed development regulations. Recent legislation, such as The Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act has highlighted the importance of the Rim of the Valley as a critical ecological resource for the region and stakeholders have expressed interest in bringing additional protections to these areas. The Wildlife Pilot Study may be expanded to include the remainder of the Santa Monica Mountains area as well as the Rim of the Valley Corridor study area. Once adopted, it is intended that the regulations being proposed in the Wildlife Ordinance will be extended beyond the [Wildlife Ordinance District pilot area](#) to all proposed Protection Areas for Wildlife (PAWs) throughout the city, which will link important ecological areas together to further enhance connectivity and biodiversity.