

Article 35. Protected Ridgeline Overlay Zone Regulations (PR)

Sec. 9-4.3500. Purpose (PR).

The City of Thousand Oaks is bounded by significant and prominent natural land forms and dotted with prominent knolls including, but not limited to, the Santa Monica Mountains, the Conejo Mountain, the Mt. Clef Ridge, and the Conejo Ridge. The visitors to and residents of the City and benefitted by the preservation of these scenic vistas and their natural features. The preservation of these natural views and open space areas by the overlay zone described in this article will enhance the public health, safety, and welfare of such visitors and residents by promoting a rural sense of openness, protecting natural and visual assets of the community, preserving areas of native vegetation and wildlife, preventing soil erosion resulting from grading in such steep areas, promoting a less urban feeling and maintaining the identity of this community. The ridgeline preservation overlay zone and regulations of this article are also enacted to implement those policies of the City's General Plan for the preservation of significant natural land forms, the maintenance and preservation of open space, and the protection of the scenic backdrop to the City's major roadways.

(§ 1, Ord. 1099-Ns, eff. April 25, 1991)

Sec. 9-4.3501. Protected ridgeline zone (PR).

The development, vegetation clearance, and grading standards contained in this article shall apply to all development, grading and other activities on properties which include those ridgelines identified in the "Ridgeline Study" adopted by the City Council in 1978, and an updated on October 11, 1988. The term "protected ridgeline" when used in this article shall mean those ridgelines depicted on the maps in that Ridgeline Study, and any other ridgeline identified by the City Council from time to time. Such ridgelines shall be protected by the application of the (PR) overlay zone or specific plan described in this article, applied pursuant to zoning procedures of Article 29 of this chapter. In considering the application of the (PR) overlay zone to a particular property, the Planning Commission shall consider and advise the Council, as part of its recommendation to the Council, whether public interest would best be served by the public acquisition of the property.

(§ 1, Ord. 1099-NS, eff. April 25, 1991)

Sec. 9-4.3502. Protected ridgeline development standards.

(a) Within the Protected Ridgeline Overlay Zone, no new structure or addition to an existing structure shall be placed or constructed, no grading shall occur and, except as to meet fire clearance requirements, no native vegetation shall be removed within three hundred (300') feet horizontally or one hundred (100') feet vertically of the crest of a protected ridgeline. However, if because of the limited size of a parcel, the topography or other physical site constraints there is no suitable location for the addition to an existing structure or the development of one single family detached home on residential zoned parcel or a viable use on a commercial or industrial zoned parcel, minor encroachments into this area or development on the parcel may be authorized by the Planning Commission consistent with subsection (b) of this section. No subdivision map shall be approved creating a parcel or a lot within three hundred (300') feet horizontally or one hundred (100') feet vertically of the crest of a protected ridgeline, unless all development and grading activity on said parcel(s) or lot(s) is prohibited, or limited to antennae, open space uses, water reservoirs or similar uses of benefit to the general public.

(b) If, because of the parcel's limited size or other physical or topographic constraints, development, grading or clearance of native vegetation can only occur within the restricted area of a Protected Ridgeline Overlay Zone the following development standards shall apply:

(1) Any structure shall be located on the portions of the parcel which are least visible from roadways depicted on the Circulation Element of the General Plan and existing developed areas.

(2) No structure shall be placed or constructed in such a way that it silhouettes against the skyline above the ridgeline when viewed from any roadway depicted on the Circulation Element of the General Plan.

(3) No grading or berming shall occur which alters the natural contours or changes the elevation of the crest of the ridgeline in order to create a pad.

(4) All buildings shall be low profile. No residential structure shall be higher than seventeen (17') feet measured from the finished grade at the center of the building wall to the highest roof elevation and any new dwelling unit, including any garage and accessory structures, shall not exceed, in total, two thousand (2,000) square feet. For existing structures, no alteration or addition to that structure shall raise the height or the elevation of the existing roof.

(5) All buildings shall be setback at least fifty (50') feet from the edge of the finished pad.

(6) Berms, rounded contour grading and landscaping shall be used when necessary to soften the visual impacts created by structures and grading.

(7) The grading, design, construction, vegetation clearance, landscaping and development shall sensitively conform to and fit into the natural terrain through creative development techniques, such as, but not limited to, split-level designs, terracing, use of native plant types, and natural blending architectural features (such as the angle of the roof line appearing as an extension of the adjacent downslope).

(8) Only low profile shaded street lighting, if needed, shall be used to reduce down slope light spillover and night glare.

(c) An applicant may request modification of the provisions of subsection (a) of this section pertaining to subdivision

maps, and modification of the standards set forth in subsections (b) (4) and (b) (5) of this section through the filing of a Special Use Permit application. The Planning Commission shall evaluate such requests on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with their consideration of other entitlement applications for a project, if any. The Commission may approve, deny, or conditionally approve such permits. The decision whether to grant modifications in conjunction with approval of a project shall be based upon the extent to which the project meets the intent and purpose set forth in Section 9-4.3500, above. A permit modifying the standards of this section may be granted, if the findings set forth in subsection (d) are made. Any decision of the Commission may be appealed to the City Council pursuant to the provisions of Article 28 of chapter 4 of Title 9 of this Code.

(d) Required findings.

(1) Where subdivision of land within the Protected Ridgeline Overlay Zone is permitted, that the project, as approved, complies with the intent of the Protected Ridgeline Overlay Zone in that it protects the scenic quality of identified ridgeline areas by preserving in a natural state the significant and prominent natural landforms which bound the Conejo Valley and the prominent knolls within it.

(2) Where the limitation on size of a residential structure set forth in subsection (b) (4) is modified, that the project complies with the intent of the Protected Ridgeline Overlay Zone in that the permitted structure does not increase the project's effect on ridgeline viewsheds, and that the size of

structure permitted is compatible with other residential structures in the same general area.

(3) Where the required setback from edge of pad set forth in subsection (b) (5) is modified, that the project complies with the intent of the Protected Ridgeline Overlay Zone in that the setback reduction does not increase the structure's visual impact on ridgeline viewsheds.

(§1, Ord. 1099-NS, eff. April 25, 1991; as amended by §1, Ord. 1273-NS, eff. January 8, 1997, as amended by Part 9, Ord. 1446-NS, eff. October 25, 2005)

Sec. 9-4.3503. Commercial/industrial zone specific plan alternative.

Commercial or industrial zoned parcels, any portion of which is within the PR Overlay Zone, shall be subject to the development standards of Section 9-4.3502, or those standards as established pursuant to a specific plan adopted by the City Council.

(§ 1, Ord. 1099-NS, eff. April 25, 1991)

Sec. 9-4.3504. Site planning/information submitted.

Applications for any development entitlement required pursuant to this title, in which any part of, or all of the parcel for which the entitlement is sought lies within a Protected Ridgeline Overlay Zone, shall include a site plan depicting the existing topography, key rock formations, oak trees, view shed analyses, proposed construction, proposed grading, proposed removal of native vegetation, proposed access, and related development activities.

(§ 1, Ord. 1099-NS, eff. April 25, 1991)