

### What are Objective Design Standards?

Housing legislation defines an "objective" standard as one that involves no personal or subjective judgment by a public official and is uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant and the public official prior to submittal.

### Proposed Process

- Study existing zoning conditions and design guidelines to review parameters suitable for objective design standards.
- Present options using visual examples for direction setting.
- Develop a "pattern book" approach including graphics, defining how parcel edges should meet adjacent conditions, with more flexibility toward the center of larger sites; address General Plan goals for walkability/bike-ability and neighborhood compatibility.
- Provide community engagement through a variety of methods.

### What can be included?

- Connectivity to streets and sidewalks
- Building Frontage and Orientation
- Building massing relationship to surroundings
- Access and entrance design
- Façade design and articulation
- Landscaping
- Other design features

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### Why do we need Objective Design Standards?

In 2017, the Governor signed multiple housing bills, including Senate Bill [\(SB\) 35](#) streamline approval process and [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 678, SB 167](#) strengthen the Housing Accountability Act. [The Housing Accountability Act \(HAA\)](#) (Government Code Section 65589.5) was first adopted in 1982 and significantly amended in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Per state law, only the objective standards in a community's zoning code can be applied to qualifying multi-family residential projects.

In Foster City, any new housing development is likely to be multi-family and/or redevelopment of existing multi-family development, given the lack of vacant land zoned for single-family development. Having objective design standards are not only a legal State requirement but can be used as a tool to assist the City in guiding the design of any multi-family housing development while trying to preserve the local community character.

If a jurisdiction has not met their RHNA goal of zoning for housing at a variety of income levels, State law allows developers to submit multi-unit housing applications under a ministerial approval process that provides for streamlined review. The ministerial process means that, among other criteria, the development must be consistent with all Objective Design Standards adopted at the time of application submittal.

If a City or Town does not have Objective Design Standards, they are still required to review and act on the project through a ministerial process, without any local guidance on design and standards.

### Non-Objective Standard Vs Objective Standard

#### Example Non-Objective Standard

Provide articulation to reduce the apparent mass and scale of the building, and to be sensitive to the neighborhood.



#### Example Non-Objective Standard

Fences and walls should be constructed of high quality, durable materials.



#### Example Objective Standard

For every 100 feet of building length, there shall be a plane-break along the façade comprised of an offset of at least five feet in depth by 25 feet in length. The offset shall extend from grade to the highest story.



#### Example Objective Standard

Fences and walls shall be constructed of brick, stone, concrete, textile block, wood, iron, or steel. Chain link, barbed wire, razor wire, and corrugated metal fencing is prohibited.



Source:  
City of Campbell

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City Council & Planning Commission Joint Special Meeting

March 24 @6:30 pm via Zoom