



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council
Chambers
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Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report Details (With Text)

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PC - ACTION ITEM: DISCUSSION OF CITYWIDE MULTI-FAMILY AND MIXED-USED OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

Meeting Date: April 26, 2023

Contact Person/Dept: Gabriela Silva, Associate Planner
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Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒ **General Fund:** Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☐ **Action Item:** ☒ **Attachments:** ☐

Public Notification: (GovDelivery-Email) Public Notifications (04/12/2023), Meetings and Agendas - Planning Commission (04/18/2023); (Posted) City website (04/18/2023), Social Media (04/12/2023)

Department Approval: Mark E. Muenzer, Planning and Development Director (04/03/2023)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission provide initial guidance and feedback regarding the Objective Design Standards presentation.

BACKGROUND

Since 2017, the California legislature has adopted and amended several housing and land use laws to address the state's housing crisis. A few have significantly changed typical planning and approval processes. Specifically, Senate Bill (SB) 35, SB 167, SB 330, and SB 8, are aimed at streamlining land use entitlements

for housing development projects. Streamlining is generally used to limit and define local control and discretion, thus providing developers with more certainty in timing and outcomes for residential and mixed-use developments.

- SB 35 (2017) streamlines housing development approvals on infill sites that comply with “objective standards”, meet minimum affordability requirements, are not environmentally sensitive, and if the developer pays prevailing wage and uses a “skilled and trained workforce” for projects over a certain threshold.
- SB 167 (2017) prohibits a local agency from disapproving or conditioning approval in a manner that renders infeasible, a housing development project for very low, low-, or moderate- income households or an emergency shelter unless the local agency makes specific written findings based upon substantial evidence in the record.
- SB 330 (2019) requires cities to approve housing development projects that comply with all applicable objective standards and establishes a preliminary application process that allows developers to lock in city ordinances, policies, and development fees prior to filing a complete application.
- SB 8 (2021) builds upon SB 330 by expanding the definition of a “housing development project” to include single family dwelling units.

Other legislation includes updates to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and Density Bonus law and adoption of SB 9 and SB 10, all of which are aimed at allowing a greater number and variety of housing types.

On October 10, 2022, the City of Culver City had its 2021-2029 Housing Element certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Included in the Housing Element’s housing programs aimed at facilitating additional housing, the City committed to *developing objective design standards to comply with SB 330* (Measure 4.H, Policy 6.J).

In December 2022, the City of Culver City engaged Rincon Consultants Inc. to review the City’s current design guidelines and Zoning Code to create a separate Objective Design Standards document that will be referenced in the Zoning Code. This project will give the community, developers, staff and decision makers more certainty about what future development will look like as the City moves forward with streamlined processes to meet the State’s goals in addressing the housing crisis and the objectives of the City’s Housing Element.

DISCUSSION

As defined by the Housing Crisis Act, a development standard is considered to be objective if it involves no “personal or subjective judgement by a public official” and is uniformly verifiable (California Government Code Section 65913.4). Due to the recent changes in State housing law outlined above, residential projects that meet certain requirements, including consistency with applicable objective standards, must be approved and processed ministerially rather than through the discretionary process implemented under current Zoning Code requirements.

The City of Culver City Municipal code (CCMC) already includes some basic objective development standards for residential zoning districts, including height limits, setback minimums, and floor area ratios (FAR). The City also has residential neighborhood design guidelines for the Gateway Adjacent and Gateway neighborhoods; though some of these guidelines may be considered subjective under State law.

Reviewing, revising and adopting more detailed objective design standards for multifamily and mixed-use

development projects city wide will help ensure that future housing development is designed in a manner consistent with the community's goals and objectives, while adhering to State law. Additionally, more detailed objective design standards will provide developers with greater certainty as to what is expected during the development review process.

At this discussion session, which constitutes the public kick-off of the Residential Objective Design Standards, staff is requesting feedback on the presentation and key issues, or design features the Planning Commission and members of the public would like to be considered as the drafting of the objective design standards document moves forward. Following the Planning Commission discussion, staff will incorporate any comments received into the draft Objective Design Standards. A draft Residential Objective Design Standards document will be drafted and made available for public review throughout the summer of 2023 after which a final draft document will be brought forth to the Planning Commission and City Council in Fall 2023.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

No fiscal impact.