

City of Santa Rosa  
OCT 21 2019  
Planning & Economic  
Development Department

## **COMMENTS IN REGARDS TO THE PROPOSED**

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
RECOMMENDING TO ZONING CODE TEXT AMENDMENT TO ADD CITY CODE  
CHAPTER 20-39 TO CREATE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIED  
RESIDENTIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS - FILE NUMBER REZ19-019

10/16/2019

RESOLUTION NO.

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF A ZONING CODE TEXT AMENDMENT TO ADD CITY CODE CHAPTER 20-39 TO CREATE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIED RESIDENTIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS - FILE NUMBER REZ19-019

WHEREAS, on January 1, 2018, Senate Bill 35, intended to help address California's housing shortage, went into effect, requiring a streamlined and ministerial review process for multifamily housing projects with specific qualifications; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 2019, Assembly Bill 2162, intended to help address California's need for supportive and emergency housing, went into effect, requiring a streamlined and ministerial review process for supportive housing with specific qualifications; and

WHEREAS, there is a continued effort by the State of California to require jurisdictions to utilize a ministerial and streamlined process for specified of housing projects. This ministerial and streamlined process requires objective standards to address a variety of design concerns typically resolved during a discretionary design review process;

WHEREAS, in June 2019, City staff members distributed an online survey to gather opinions on the proposed design standards to be incorporated into the City Code;

WHEREAS, on June 20, 2019, a Joint Session of the Cultural Heritage Board and Design Review Board (Board) was held, and Board members provided comments regarding the proposed objective design standards;

WHEREAS, feedback from the Cultural Heritage Board, Design Review Board and community have been incorporated into the standards as feasible; and

WHEREAS, on September 12, 2019, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed Objective Design Standards for Streamlined and Ministerial Residential Developments; and

WHEREAS, following the public hearing, the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Rosa finds that amending the Santa Rosa Zoning Code, as follows, is required for public convenience, necessity and general welfare:

## “Chapter 20-39 **OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR STREAMLINED AND MINISTERIAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS**

### **20-39.010 Purpose of Chapter.**

This Chapter establishes objective residential design standards that are sourced from the City’s Design Guidelines. Typically, new residential development is required to go through the City’s discretionary Design Review process, which includes review for compliance with the City’s Design Guidelines. The Design Guidelines are subjective in nature and demonstrate preferences while allowing discretion and flexibility, and as such, cannot be enforced through a streamlined ministerial process. The proposed Objective Design Standards for Streamlined and Ministerial Residential Developments aim to incorporate the intent of the Santa Rosa Design Guidelines to the greatest extent possible, while complying with the intent of State legislation to facilitate and expedite the construction of housing in Santa Rosa.

### **20-39.020 Applicability.**

The provisions of this Chapter apply to all residential projects which upon applicant request and demonstration of eligibility, qualify for streamlined and ministerial processing.

### **20-39.030 Objective Residential Design Standards**

Consistent with existing State Law, objective standards are those that involve no personal or subjective judgment by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark.

Residential developments that are subject to this Chapter must be consistent with each of the standards below:

#### **A. Neighborhood Compatibility**

1. Residential projects located across the street from single-family neighborhoods shall orient the buildings to the street with individual entries, patio areas and landscaping facing the single-family homes. Parking lot areas and carports shall not be located along single-family neighborhood street frontages.
2. Duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes developed abutting single-family neighborhoods shall include individual front doors and ~~interior~~ stairs.  
*Comments: Why require “interior” stairs? This is confusing for 1-story buildings.*
3. When determined necessary by a noise assessment, sound walls shall include an earth berm and landscaping. Walls between buildings shall be extended to create pockets of protected common space avoiding long continuous walls for the entire length of a project site.

## B. Building Design

1. Buildings shall carry the same theme on all elevations. For the purposes of this standard, a theme includes primary (non-accent) materials and colors.
2. Affordable units and market rate units in the same development shall be constructed of the same or similar exterior materials and details such that the units are not distinguishable.
3. Blank walls (facades without doors, windows, landscaping treatments) shall be less than 30 feet in length along sidewalks, pedestrian walks, or publicly accessible outdoor space areas.
4. Buildings over three stories must provide a ground floor elevation that is distinctive from the upper stories by providing a material change between the first floor and upper floors along at least 75% of the building façade with frontage upon a street, adjacent public park or public open space.
5. Trim surrounds shall be provided at all exterior window and door openings.  
*Comments: How does this apply to the traditional Spanish, Mission, Pueblo, International or Modernistic styles? This should be omitted.*
6. At least two materials shall be used on any building frontage, in addition to glazing and railings. Any one material must comprise at least 20% of the building frontage.
7. A minimum of 5/8 inch is required for panel siding. Battens are required to be incorporated into the design for a board and pattern appearance.  
*Comments: Are Battens required because of the 5/8" panel siding, or is this supposed to mean: For a Board and Batten appearance,...? Please clarify.*

## C. Massing/Articulation

1. A minimum of two features such as balconies, cantilevers, dormers, bay windows, patios, individualized entries, and accent materials shall be incorporated into each project building.
2. A minimum three-foot offset is required for any wall plane that exceeds 30 feet in length.  
*Comments: Minimum (1) foot offset is sufficient whereas 3 feet appears to be arbitrary and an excess use of materials in construction.*
3. Buildings over three stories tall shall have major massing breaks at least every 100 feet along any street frontage, adjacent public park, publicly accessible outdoor space, or designated open space, through the use of varying setbacks and/or building entries. Major



breaks shall be a minimum of 30 inches deep and four feet wide and extend the full height of the building.

4. Buildings shall have ~~minor~~-massing breaks at least every 50 feet along the street frontage, through the use of varying setbacks, building entries and recesses, or structural bays. ~~Minor~~ breaks shall be a minimum of 18 inches deep and four feet wide and extend the full height of the building.

Comments: The word “minor” should be omitted. Min. 1 foot deep recess is sufficient and to extend a min. of (1) story. Extending the full height of the building is too restrictive and would inhibit distinctive design. Furthermore how will this affect the roof style or roof edge?

5. Rooflines shall be vertically articulated at least every 50 feet along the street frontage, through the use of architectural elements such as parapets, varying cornices, reveals, clerestory windows, and varying roof height and/or form.

#### D. Outdoor/Common Space

1. Each multifamily unit outside the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan boundary shall have a minimum of 40 square feet of private outdoor space directly adjacent to the unit. For the purposes of this standard, private outdoor space is defined as outdoor space that is usable and accessible only to the building residents and their visitors, but not to the general public.

2. Common useable open space is required for all multifamily projects with more than 10 units outside the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan boundary.

3. A minimum of 70% of the common usable open space shall be provided as a landscaped green area or garden, with the remaining area in hardscape.

Comments: This should be reduced to a minimum of 30% which is fairly common on high density, multi-family, podium projects (i.e. even those with pools, gyms, etc.). This requirement would limit the development of high density housing. Furthermore, there are many common areas that serve as respite and community area that do not necessarily comply with an arbitrary 70% green space requirement.

4. Outdoor seating shall be provided at the following locations: common usable open space areas and laundry rooms.

Comments: **Outdoor seating in a laundry room? ...this requirement for laundry rooms should be omitted.**

5. **Multifamily developments (except Senior restricted multifamily developments) outside the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan boundary exceeding twenty-two bedroom units shall have two outdoor areas, one for adults and one for a child play area. For the purpose of this standard, adult open space does not include play equipment, but does include tables with seating.**

6. Multifamily developments (except Senior restricted multifamily developments) outside the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan boundary exceeding 100 units shall have three open space areas, one for adults, one for teenagers, and one for younger children. For the purpose of this standard, adult open space does not include play equipment, but does include tables with seating, and teenage outdoor areas include sports fields, age- appropriate park equipment, or other recreational equipment.

**Comments:** The requirement of a “sports field” should be omitted because it is subjective and prone to being misinterpreted to something overly costly, i.e. synthetic turf, all-grass tennis court, etc. The parkland fund requirements should suffice. Also, this can be counter to the requirement of #3.

7. Play equipment for children under the age of five shall be included in child play areas. The play area must be visible to as many units as possible to provide casual surveillance and be separated from traffic. Benches or picnic tables for adults that are accompanying younger children shall be provided.

#### E. Site Design

1. Dwellings and windows of kitchen, living, or dining rooms shall be oriented to overlook common open space and play areas.

**Comments:** This should be omitted since it restricts higher density urban design type projects.

2. Primary building entrances and associated paths of travel shall be visible from the adjacent street.

**Comments:** This should be omitted since it restricts higher density urban design type projects. How does this apply to buildings recessed within a lot and far from view from the adjacent street?

3. Garages and carports shall be designed to include a minimum of two of the following from the main building(s): materials, detailing, roof materials, and colors.

4. Controlled entrances to parking facilities (gates, doors, etc.) shall be located a minimum of 18 feet from the back of sidewalk, in order to accommodate one vehicle entering the facility.

5. Where bicycle parking is not visible from the street, directional signage shall be included at the main building entrance.

6. Screen all parking areas, covered and uncovered, from public street frontages. Screening may be accomplished through building placement, landscaping, a planted earth berm, planted fencing, topography, or some combination of the above. Landscaping used for screening purposes must shall be no less than 15 feet wide (from the back of sidewalk or street curb to the parking lot paving, whichever is greater) and no less than four feet tall.

**Comments:** The “15 feet wide” should be omitted since there may be a smaller required setback requirement and this could be confusing.



## F. Accessory Elements

1. Perimeter fencing utilized along public street shall be constructed of decorative iron, pre-painted welded steel, or wood picket material.
2. The height of solid fencing between private yards and common open spaces shall be limited to 4.5 feet in height. If a six-foot fence is desired, the top 18 inches should allow for vision in and out of the yard.
3. Screen roof top equipment from visibility. The point of view for determining visibility shall be 5 feet above grade at a distance of 200 feet. If the roof structure does not provide this screening, include an equipment screen in the design.
4. Screen all exterior trash, recycling, and storage utility boxes, wood service poles, electric and gas meters, fire sprinkler valves and backflow preventers and transformers.
5. Refuse Containers:
  - a. Four units or less may be served by individual garbage containers. When individual garbage cans are used, they must either fit in the garage or into a special enclosure.¶
  - ~~b. —~~ When there are five units or more, provide dumpsters for garbage collection within a special enclosure.
  - c. When dumpsters are to be used, designers shall coordinate with the refuse pickup provider to determine the size and number of dumpsters required. A rule of thumb is to allow for between 30 and 90 gallons per unit per week, depending on size of the unit.
  - d. Shield all dumpsters within an enclosure a minimum of six feet tall. Allow adequate size to accommodate the needed dumpsters and recycling containers. All enclosures and gates should be detailed to withstand heavy use. Provide wheel stops or curbs to prevent dumpsters from banging into walls of enclosure.
  - e. Make allowances within the enclosure for stacking recycling crates (in small projects) and recycling dumpsters (in large projects)
  - f. Provide an opening so that pedestrians can access the dumpsters without opening the large gates.
  - g. Provide lighting at trash enclosures for night time security and use.
  - h. Locate dumpster enclosures so that no dwelling is closer than ~~20-5~~ feet (including those on abutting properties), or more than 100 feet from a residential unit.”

Comments: (5) foot min. distance between a fully enclosed trash area is sufficient for clearance for higher density projects. How does this apply to podium projects with trash collection within the building footprint?

## **G. Additional Objective Standards within Zoning Code**

Projects subject to this Chapter must comply with all other applicable objective standards for within this Zoning Code including, but not limited to:

1. Development Standards as indicated in Sections 20-22.040 and 20-22.050, as may be amended.
2. Landscaping Standards as indicated in Sections 20-34.040, 20-34.050, 20-34.060, and 20-34.070, as may be amended.
3. Parking and Loading Standards as indicated in Sections 20-36.030, 20-36.040, 20-36.050, 20-36.060, 20-36.070, 20-36.080, 20-36.090, as may be amended, unless otherwise superseded by State law.
4. Creekside Development Standards as indicated in Section 20-30.040.B.1, 20-30.040.B.2, 20-30.040.C, 20-30.040.D, 20-30.040.E, as may be amended.
5. Outdoor Lighting Standards as indicated in Section 20-30.080, as may be amended.
6. Fences, Walls and Screening Standards as indicated in Section 20-30.060.B, 20-30.060.C, 20-30.060.G, as may be amended.
7. Height Measurement and Exception Standards as indicated in Sections 20-30.070, as may be amended.
6. Hillside Development Standards as indicated in Section 20-32.050, as may be amended.”



WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, pursuant to City Code Section 20-64.050 (Findings), hereby finds and determines:

- A. The proposed amendment is consistent with the goals and policies of all elements of the General Plan, and any applicable specific plan;
- B. The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City in that it would amend the City Code to provide for increased public noticing for projects that may affect them;
- C. The proposed amendments are exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) in that the amendments do not have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment and are not subject to CEQA review. The amendments proposed will preserve and enhance aesthetic resources and each of the proposed amendments is necessary to conform the Code to State law, and any conceivable impact of the proposed amendments would be speculative in the absence of specific development proposals;
- D. The proposed amendment is internally consistent with other applicable provisions of the Zoning Code.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission recommends to the City Council approval and adoption of the Zoning Code amendments as indicated above.

REGULARLY PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Rosa on the 12th day of September 2019, by the following vote:

AYES: ()  
NOES: ()  
ABSTAIN: ()  
ABSENT: ()

APPROVED:

PATTI CISCO, CHAIR

ATTEST:

CLARE HARTMAN, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY