

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD AND DESIGN REVIEW
BOARD

JUNE 20, 2019

PROJECT TITLE

SB35 Design Standards for Multifamily
Housing

APPLICANT

N/A

ADDRESS/LOCATION

Citywide

PROPERTY OWNER

N/A

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

N/A

FILE NUMBER

REZ19-009

APPLICATION DATE

N/A

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

N/A

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

N/A

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Adoption of Zoning Code Text Amendment

PROJECT SITE ZONING

N/A

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

N/A

PROJECT PLANNER

Amy Nicholson

RECOMMENDATION

Provide comments

For Joint Cultural Heritage Board and Design Review Board Meeting of: June 20, 2019

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD AND DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR EDMONDSON AND MEMBERS OF THE CULTURAL
HERITAGE BOARD AND CHAIR KINCAID AND MEMBERS OF
THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

FROM: AMY NICHOLSON, CITY PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: SB35 DESIGN STANDARDS FOR MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

AGENDA ACTION: PROVIDE COMMENTS

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Cultural Heritage Board and the Design Review Board provide comments regarding the proposed Multifamily Design Standards as required by Senate Bill 35.

BACKGROUND

California State Senate Bill 35 (SB35 – Government Code Section 65913.4), which went into effect on January 1, 2018, was part of a comprehensive housing package aimed at addressing the State's housing shortage and high housing costs. SB35 requires the availability of a streamlined ministerial approval process for developments located in jurisdictions that have not yet made sufficient progress towards their required allocation of the regional housing need. The City of Santa Rosa is subject to SB35, which means that an eligible project within the City must be streamlined and not subject to discretionary review (i.e.: Conditional Use Permit, Design Review and/or Landmark Alteration Permit).

For a project to be eligible for the streamlined SB35 process it is required to meet specific criteria, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Provide a specified level of affordability;
- Located on an infill site and without specified environmental issues;
- Comply with residential and mixed-use General Plan or Zoning provisions; and

- Comply with all City objective standards.

Additional information on project eligibility requirements can be found in Attachments 2 and 3 to this report.

1. Project Description

The purpose of the SB35 Design Standards initiative is to prepare and adopt clear and objective multifamily residential design standards that respond to SB35 and are sourced from the City's Design Guidelines. New multifamily residential development is currently 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 to demonstrate preferences while allowing discretion and flexibility, and as such, cannot be enforced through the SB35 streamlined ministerial process. The proposed SB35 Design Standards for Multifamily Housing aim to incorporate the intent of the Santa Rosa Design Guidelines to the greatest extent possible, while complying with the intent of SB35 to facilitate and expedite the construction of housing in Santa Rosa.

The proposed Design Standards are grouped into multiple categories that include Neighborhood Compatibility, Building Design, Massing/Articulation, Outdoor/Common Space, Site Design, and Accessory Elements, and are included as Attachment 1 to this report.

2. Project History

September 29, 2017 - Governor Brown approved Senate Bill 35 to require streamlined ministerial approval of qualifying housing projects for cities and counties that had not made sufficient progress through their Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals.

January 1, 2018 - Senate Bill 35 became effective State law.

June 10, 2019 - A survey was released to the public to receive input on proposed design standards before the Cultural Heritage Board and Design Review Board.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

The majority of the attached draft standards are based on the existing City Design Guidelines related to multifamily development and the more general design principles included in the Design Guidelines. Several of the draft standards were formed after reviewing the objective design standards of other California cities.

The primary goal with these objective standards is to ensure superior architecture, sensitive site planning and neighborhood compatibility with ministerial Design Review and Landmark Alteration approval. Specific areas of interest and challenge include objective standards to ensure the aforementioned compatibility in existing historic residential neighborhoods.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

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 and 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.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

On June 10, 2019, an online survey regarding the proposed design standards was released to the public. This survey was distributed to the Community Advisory Board, Planning and Economic Development Department email distribution list, and was posted on the City's various social media accounts. The results of the survey will be reported verbally during the June 20th, 2019, Staff presentation.

Prior to the Planning Commission and City Council public hearings, noticing will be completed in compliance with Zoning Code Section 20-66.020(D), Alternative to Mailing, by providing notice by placing an advertisement of at least one-eighth page in at least one newspaper of general circulation 10 days prior. Notice will also be posted to the Departments' website, and distributed by email.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Proposed Design Standards
Attachment 2 – HCD – Draft SB35 Guidelines

Attachment 3 – Government Code for SB35

WEB RESOURCES

City Website: Existing Design Guidelines for Multifamily Housing -
<https://srcity.org/368/Design-Guidelines>

City Website: Existing Standards in the Zoning Code related to Lighting, Landscaping,
other Development Standards -
<http://www.qcode.us/codes/santarosa/view.php?topic=20&frames=on>

City Website: SB35 Design Standards Initiative – www.srcity.org/SB35 - Includes link to
public input survey and future public meetings

CONTACT

Amy Nicholson, City Planner
Planning and Economic Development Department
Anicholson@srcity.org, (707) 543-3258