



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Board of Supervisors Chambers  
500 County Center, Redwood City

## ITEM 7

Applicant: ..... **County of San Mateo**

Owners:..... **Various**

Location: ..... **Various**

File Number: ..... **PLN 2025-00232**

### Project Description:

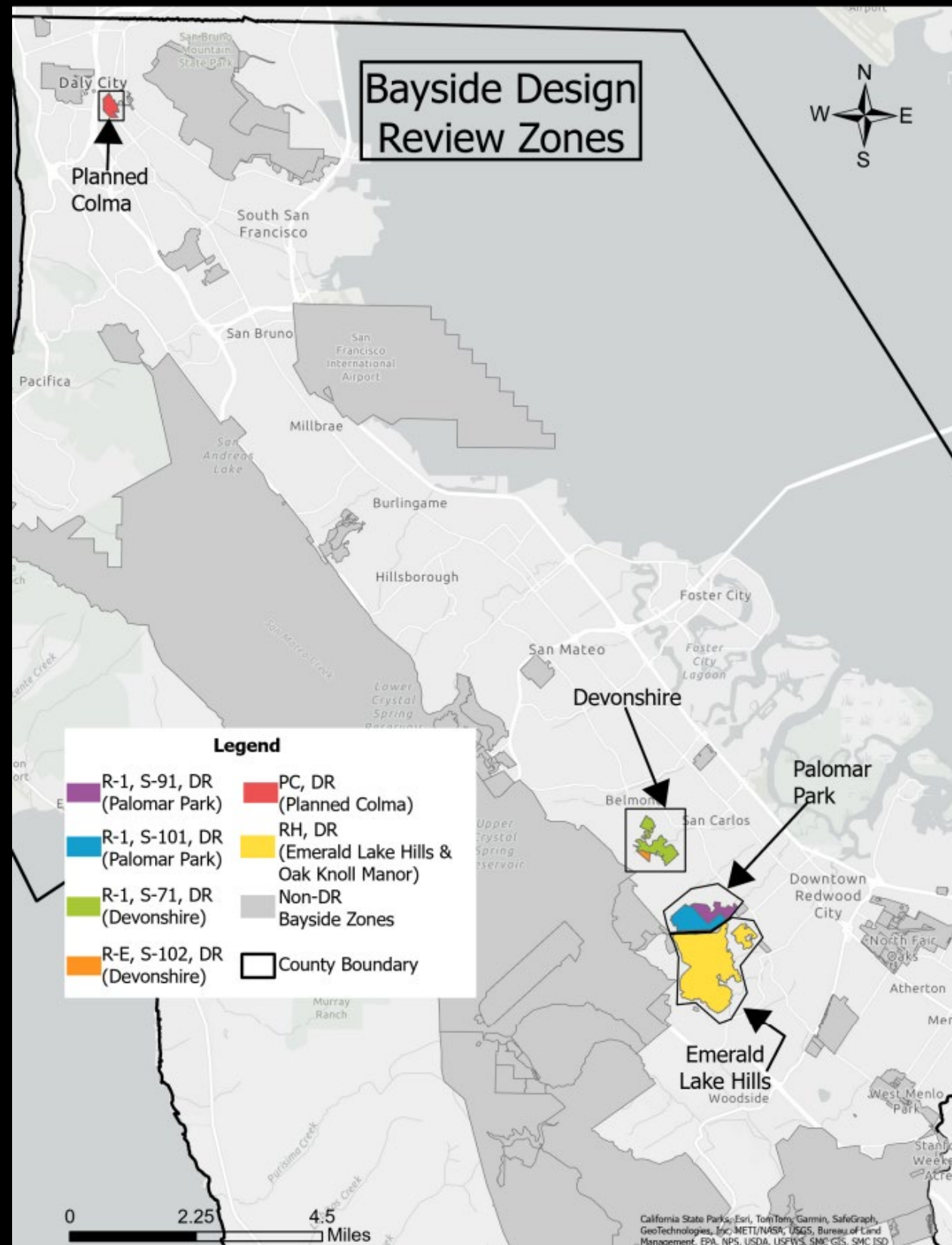
Consideration of an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 of the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations), regulating Design Review (DR) Districts, and related conforming zoning text amendments; a resolution directing submittal of the new Chapter 8.256, as an amendment to the County's Local Coastal Program, to the California Coastal Commission for review and certification; and a resolution amending the Planning and Building Department Planning Service Fee Schedule to add design review fees for ministerial review and exceptions.



## **Objectives of the Design Review (DR) Ordinance Update Project**

1. Revise current DR Zoning District design standards to be objective and enforceable
2. Establish a ministerial design review process in areas outside of the Coastal Zone, reducing project costs and time
3. Address Coastside Design Review Committee (CDRC) feedback and public concerns
4. Impose design review standards on small projects not requiring other permits

# Non-Coastal Design Review (DR) Areas



- Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll Manor
- Devonshire
- Palomar Park
- Planned Colma

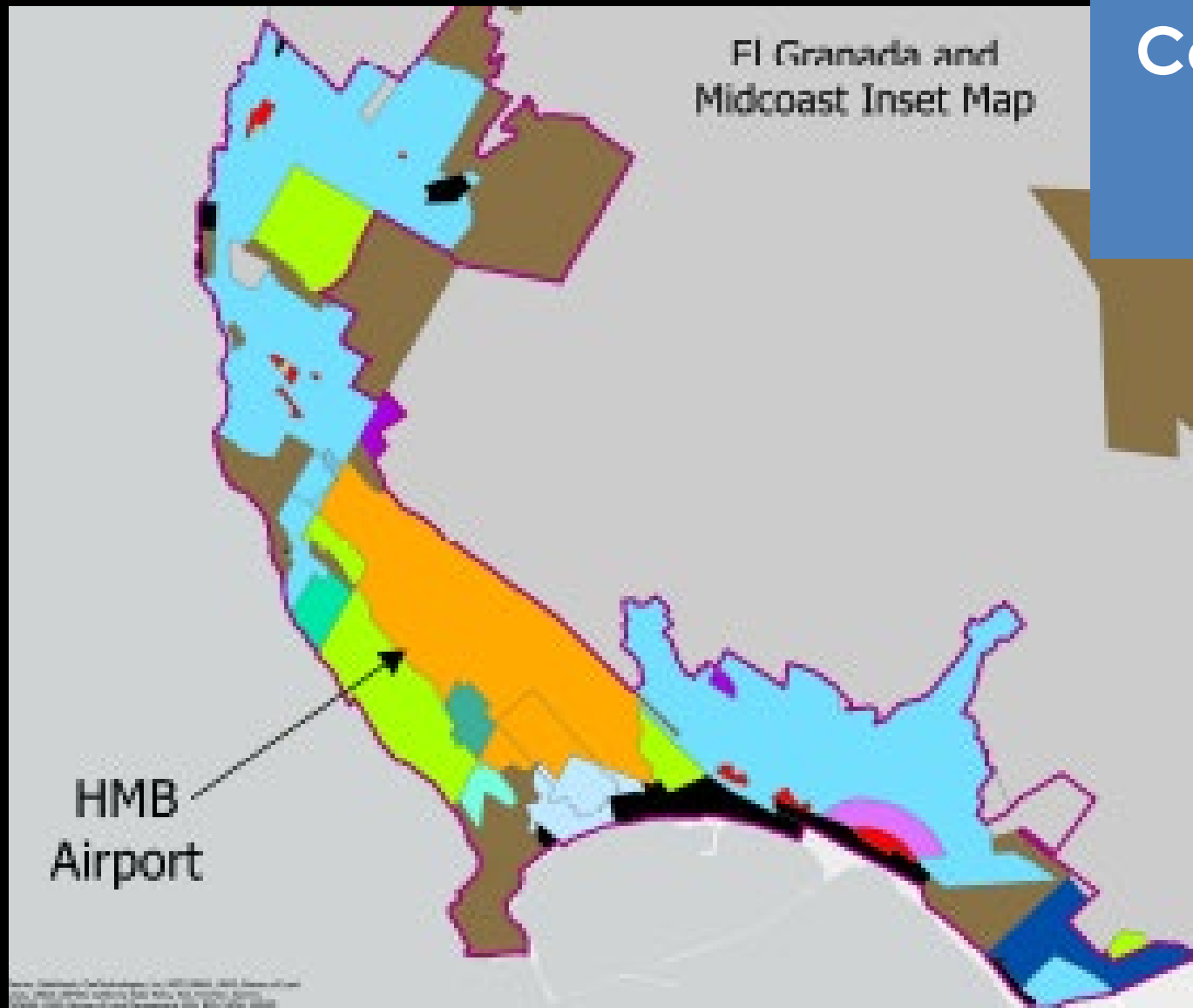


**COUNTY OF  
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# Coastal Design Review (DR) Areas

El Granada and Midcoast Inset Map

HMB Airport



El Granada



0 2 4 Miles

## Legend

Midcoast Project Area	R-1, S-10, DR, CD
<b>Coastal DR Zones</b>	R-1, S-105, DR, GH, CD
C-1, S-3, DR, CD	R-1, S-13, DR, CD
C-1, S-7, DR, CD	R-1, S-17, AO, DR, CD
CCR, DR, CD	R-1, S-17, DR, CD
CCR, DR, GH, CD	R-1, S-17, DR, CD, NIAE
COSC, DR, CD	R-1, S-17, DR, GH, CD
EG, DR	R-1, S-7, DR, CD
M-1, AO, DR, CD	R-1, S-94, DR, CD
M-1, DR, CD	R-3, S-3, DR, CD
MH, DR, CD	R-3-A, S-5, DR, CD
P, DR	RM-CZ, AO, DR, CD
PAD, DR, CD	RM-CZ, DR, CD
PAD, DR, GH, CD	RM-CZ, DR, GH, CD
PUD-120, DR, CD	W, AO, DR, CD
PUD-121, DR, CD	W, DR, CD
	Non-DR Coastal Zones

San Gregorio  
(R-1/S-10, C-1/S-7)

Pescadero  
(R-1/S-7 & S-10  
C-1/S-7)

El Granada and Midcoast Inset Map

- Midcoast: Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Miramar
- Other Areas: San Gregorio, Pescadero



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## **Main Changes to Ordinance:**

- DR Standards Table
- Objective Language
- Recommendations
- Ministerial Review
- Discretionary Review
- Story Poles, Building Height, and Lighting in Midcoast
- Exemptions



# DR STANDARDS TABLE

**New Table Format:** Standards listed with applicable areas OR Project Type (e.g., ADU) checked with "X"

Areas:

- Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll, Palomar Park, Devonshire
- Midcoast
- All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)
  - Non-residential zoning districts or non-residential development in the Midcoast
  - San Gregorio and Pescadero

DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE					
No.	STANDARD	ADUs	Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH)... Palomar Park (PP)... Devonshire (DEV)	Midcoast	All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)
<b>A Building Siting</b>					
1	For lots wider than 75 feet in area of proposed development, single story and low eave design shall be used in the transition area between the development and any adjoining areas designated for agriculture, recreation, or open space. The transition area for side-abutting development is defined as within 15 feet from both sides of a shared lot line. The building eave facing the shared lot line with adjoining open space shall be no higher than 12 feet or, when the adjoining open space area contains buildings within 15 feet of the shared lot line, the eave shall be no higher than 10% higher than the height of the adjoining building(s). (For low eave design, see Figures 11-15).	X (Montara Only)		X (Montara Only)	X
2	Structures are set back from the edge of bluffs and cliffs a distance equal to the maximum proposed height of the building or located-in areas of the property that are not visible, as viewed from scenic areas below.	X (Coastal zone only)		X (Source: CDM; other areas)	X
3	Locate and design new development and landscaping so that ocean views are not blocked from public viewing points such as public roads and publicly-owned lands.	X (Coastal zone only)		X (LCP 8.12.b)	X (LCP 8.12.b)
4	Development shall only be placed on or above a ridgeline if there is no other	X (Coastal)		X	X



## Make Design Standards Objective

### Subjective Language

- Minimize filling or placement of earth materials.
- Use an architectural style and design elements that complement the predominant style of nearby homes, only when such homes conform with the design standards.
- Locate the primary portion of the second stories toward the center of the first story and away from property lines whenever feasible.

### Objective Language

- Prohibit raised building pads of more than 8 inches above the low side of the existing grade...
- The design of new buildings shall incorporate building and/or roof forms, colors, and/or materials of adjacent buildings and natural Environment.
- In Midcoast, the Project eliminates the option for compliance with Daylight Plane or Façade Articulation to require both.



## Former Standards Now Included as Recommendations

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Subjective standards that could not be made objective (e.g., quantitative)

- Consider neighbor privacy when constructing new windows and outdoor areas
- Consider neighbor view blockage from primary windows
- Design buildings to allow for passive heating and cooling
- Face garages away from or set back from street
- If prominent garage is unavoidable, use decorative garage doors to be consistent with house architecture



# New Ministerial Design Review Process - Non-Coastal Zone

## Non-Coastal Zone

- Ministerial Review (no discretionary review)  
Lower Fees:
  - \$861 for New Development
  - \$646 for Addition
- Allows for application of DR standards to State-streamlined housing projects

Table 1: Review Process by Project Type in Non-Coastal Zone

	Current Ordinance	Updated Ordinance
<b>State-streamlined housing</b> (e.g., SB 9, SB 35, ADUs)	Ministerial review with application of limited existing objective standards for SB 9 projects; <u>no objective standards for other housing types</u>	<u>Ministerial review with objective standards</u>
<b>Non-State-streamlined housing</b> (SFDs, Additions)	<u>Discretionary review with objective and subjective standards</u>	<u>Ministerial review with objective standards</u>



# New Limited Ministerial Design Review Process – Coastal Zone

## Coastal Zone

- Maintains discretionary review process for single-family homes and additions
- Makes previously-subjective standards objective
- Applies DR standards to ADUs

Table 2: Review Process by Project Type in Coastal Zone

	Current Ordinance	Updated Ordinance
<b>State-streamlined housing</b> (e.g., ADUs)	Ministerial review with no objective standards applied	Ministerial review with objective standards
<b>Non-State-streamlined housing</b> (SFDs, Additions)	Discretionary review with objective and subjective standards	Discretionary review with objective standards



## New Design Review Fees

### **Ministerial Review Fees**

- New Single Family Residential: \$861
- New Commercial/Multifamily Residential: \$861
- Single Family Residential Alteration/Addition; Detached/Attached ADUs: \$646

### **Exception Fees** (added to applicable review fees)

- Minor Exception by Design Review Administrator: \$861
- Major Exception (via Use Permit from Planning Commission): \$4,079



## Story Poles Required for Discretionary Review in Midcoast

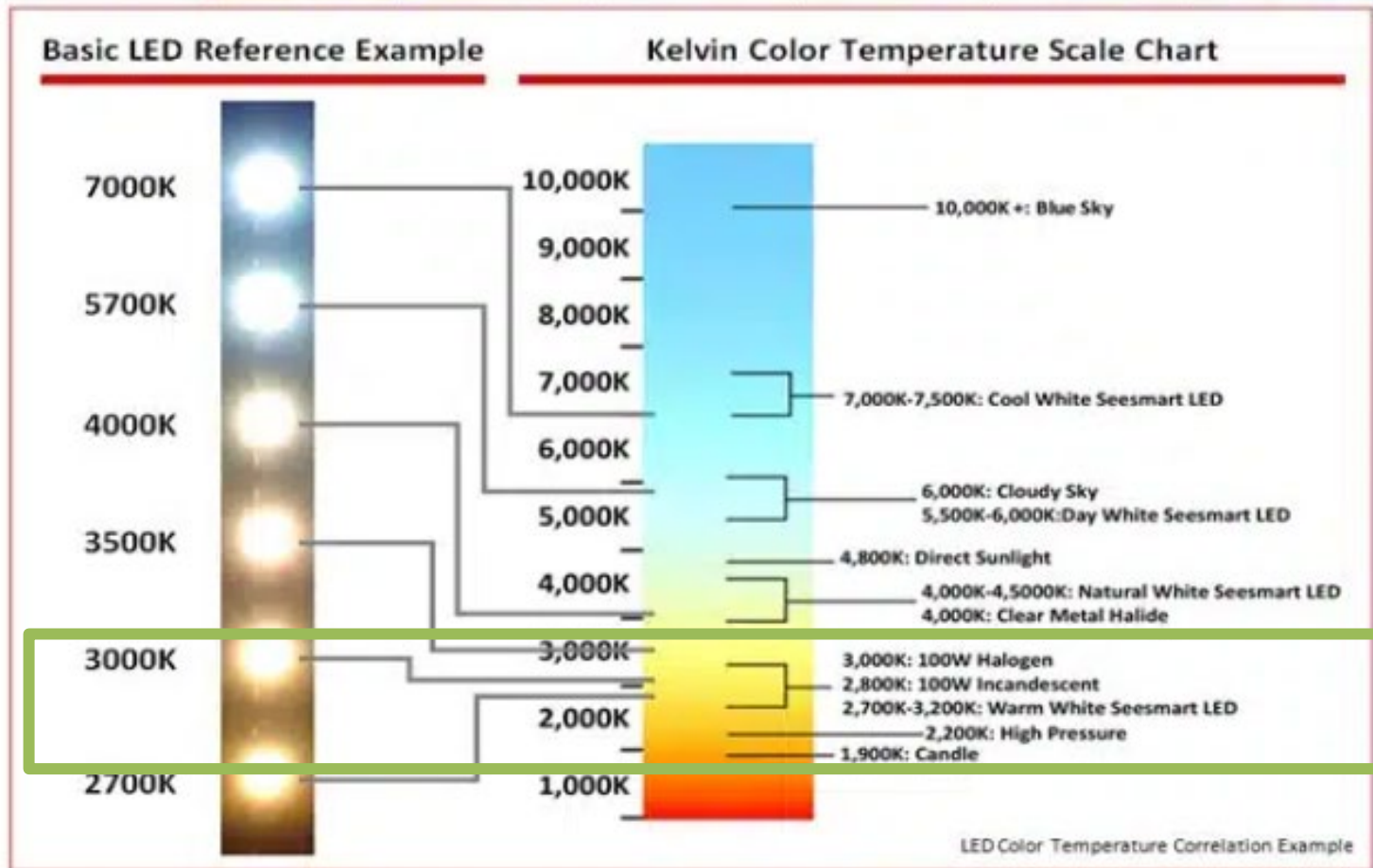
- Strong Public Support for Story Poles
- Exempted from Story Poles:
  - Project 800 sf or less that meet setbacks and:
    - less than 16' height, ground floor, or
    - no change to roofline of 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> story addition
  - Not visible from street or residences within 50 feet



Kelvin Color Temperature	2700K	3000K	3500K	4100K	5000K	6500K
Associated Effects and Moods	Ambiant Intimate Personal	Calm Warm	Friendly Inviting	Precise Clean Efficient	Daylight Vibrant	Daylight Alert
Appropriate Applications	Living/Family Rooms Commercial/Hospitality	Living/Family Rooms Commercial/Hospitality	Kitchen/Bath Light Commercial	Garage Commercial	Commercial Industrial Institutional	Commercial Industrial Institutional

## Exterior Lighting – Coastal Zone

- **3000k** maximum for single-family residential:
  - Dark Sky compliant
  - Smaller fixtures
  - Easier for current homeowners to comply, who may already have 'dark-sky' fixtures
- Lower, warmer maximum of **2200k** for multiple-family residential, institutional, commercial projects, where light poles are used and have more impact on dark sky





# Building Height Measurement in Urban Midcoast

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## 8.256.141. BUILDING HEIGHT MEASUREMENT IN URBAN MIDCOAST DR. DISTRICTS

In urban areas of the Midcoast subject to Design Review, building height shall be measured as the vertical distance from any point on the natural or existing grade to the topmost point of the building immediately above.

- Currently: height measured based on average roofline to average grade
- Proposed: imposes familiar S-17 height measurement method: height measured as vertical distance from natural or existing grade to topmost point of building above

## Urban, Midcoast Zoning Districts:

- C-1
- R-1
- M-1
- RM-CZ
- EG
- W\*



# Main Changes to Standards

## Bird-Strike Proof Window Treatment

- Added at direction of Planning Commission
- Applies to all glass railings at any height
- Applies to planned developments, commercial, multifamily, and industrial construction projects, additions onto existing development, or where 50% or more exterior glass will be replaced
- Exempt: single-family homes up to 30 feet in height

No.	STANDARD	ADUs	Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)	MidCoast	All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)
E	<u>Windows, Doors, and Decks</u>				
2	All planned developments (e.g., subdivisions), single-family homes, commercial, multifamily, and industrial construction projects, additions onto existing development, or where 50% or more exterior glass will be replaced, must have bird-friendly treatment. Treatment is defined as: 1) one of the following applied to Surface 1/Exterior glass: a) opaque 1/4" dots or 1/8" lines with 2x2" spacing, b) low reflectance opaque materials, c) non-glass double skin facades, and 2) screens, metal screens or solar shading (External blinds, shutters, or rollers that can be moved based on the sun's position). In addition, regardless of height, all glass railings, all areas with transparent corners, fly-through features, and all glass up to 24 ft. above a green roof, must be treated. Exemptions: Single-family homes up to 30-ft above grade, first-floor storefronts, and all operable sash windows.		X	X	X



## **Main Changes to Standards – All DR Areas**

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### **Small Projects not Requiring Other Permits**

- Imposes design review standards on small projects that don't require other County permits (exterior painting, lighting)
- Gives County authority to enforce DR standards for alterations that do not comply
- Enforcement would begin one year after adoption, at County discretion based on level and priority of violation



## Exemption from Design Review

- Codifies current practices with exemption for small projects/additions
- Non-Coastal Zone: maintains exemption up to 500 sf
- Coastal Zone: expands exemption from 150 sf to 500 sf
  - Must meet setbacks
  - Must be under 16' in height

**8.256.040. EXEMPTIONS.** The Design Review Administrator (DRA) may exempt activities which otherwise require a ministerial or discretionary design review process from the requirements of as allowed in this Chapter. ~~when~~ Such activities shall be ~~listed and described in exemption guidance prepared by~~ ~~in the judgment of the DRA,~~ Exempt projects shall be those that are determined to be minor in nature and will not have an adverse effect on compliance with design standards ~~or guideline~~ or zoning regulations applicable to the property or structure in question.

**A. Over-the-Counter Exemptions:** Such minor activities, as listed and described in exemption guidance prepared by the DRA, may be exempted by staff;

**B. Formal Exemption:** Projects exempt from Design Review subject to a formal exemption application process: All new construction that is 500 square feet or less and complies with setbacks, except that construction must be under 16 feet in height in the Midcoast, which are not eligible for an over-the-counter exemption.

**C. Applications for a Formal Exemption**

1. Applications for a formal exemption shall be filed in the manner prescribed by the DRA and shall be accompanied by a fee set by resolution of the Board of Supervisors.
2. A notice of pending application for formal exemption under this Section shall be on a form provided by the County and conspicuously posted by the applicant at eye level at the front of the property nearest the street. Public notice shall be provided at least ten calendar days prior to a decision on an exemption.
3. Such notices shall be on forms provided by the County.
4. The DRA shall consider any public comments received during the comment period prior to a decision on a formal exemption.
5. Exemptions shall be documented by the DRA, whose decision of exemptions shall be final.



## PUBLIC REVIEW OF ORDINANCE

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### **Project Webpage:**

<https://www.smcgov.org/planning/design-review-dr-ordinance-update-project>

### **Public Meetings:**

Bayside Design Review Committee: September and October 2025

Coastside Design Review Committee: August, September, October 2025

Midcoast Community Council: October 22, 2025; February 11, 2026

Planning Commission recommendation on January 28, 2026

**Working with Interested Parties:** Reviews with design professionals, developers, and interested members of the public



## WHEN WILL ORDINANCE TAKE EFFECT?

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- **Non-Coastal Zone:** 30 days after Design Review Ordinance adoption by the Board of Supervisors
- **Coastal Zone:**
  - After Board adoption, staff will submit Design Review Ordinance to California Coastal Commission for certification
  - Effective immediately upon California Coastal Commission certification



## RECOMMENDATION

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Public hearing for consideration of an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 of the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations):

1. Open public hearing
2. Close public hearing
3. Adopt an **ordinance** repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) regulating Design Review (DR) Districts, and related conforming zoning text amendments, previously introduced to the Planning Commission on January 28, 2026; and
4. Adopt a **resolution** directing submittal of the new Chapter 8.256 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) regulating Design Review (DR) Districts, and related conforming zoning text amendments, as amendments to the County's Local Coastal Program, to the California Coastal Commission for review and certification; and
5. Adopt a **resolution** amending the Planning and Building Department Planning Service Fee Schedule to add design review fees for ministerial review and exceptions.



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Board of Supervisors Chambers  
500 County Center, Redwood City

## ITEM 5

Applicant: ..... **County of San Mateo**  
Owners:..... **Various**  
Location: ..... **Various**  
File Number: ..... **PLN 2025-00232**

Project Description:  
Consideration of an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 of the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations), regulating Design Review (DR) Districts, and related conforming zoning text amendments; a resolution directing submittal of the new Chapter 8.256, as an amendment to the County's Local Coastal Program, to the California Coastal Commission for review and certification; and a resolution amending the Planning and Building Department Planning Service Fee Schedule to add design review fees for ministerial review and exceptions.