

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

**DATE:** May 13, 2026

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Planning Staff

**SUBJECT:** STAFF REPORT ADDENDUM: Consideration of an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 of the County Ordinance Code regarding design review standards and adopting related text amendments to the County Zoning Regulations for various zoning districts for consistency with the new ordinance. The Planning Commission recommended approval of a new design review ordinance on January 28, 2026. Staff requests that the Planning Commission consider further modifications to the proposed ordinance regarding bird safety standards for glass and railings and application of exterior light standards to single-family residences for new construction and major remodels/additions only and excluding existing residences. The new ordinance will regulate development within Design Review zoning districts in the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County.

County File Number: PLN2025-00232 (San Mateo County)

**PROPOSAL**

The overarching goals of the Design Review (DR) Ordinance Update Project (Project) are to:

1. Revise the current DR Zoning District design standards such that they are objective in order to replace subjective standards, which cannot be enforced per State law for State-streamlined housing project types (such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and SB 9 and SB 35 projects), to ensure that new projects remain compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods; and
2. Further streamline design review, including, but not limited to establishing a ministerial design review process in areas outside of the Coastal Zone, thereby eliminating the Bayside Design Review Committee (BDRC) and the Emerald Lake Hills Design Review Officer (DRO) hearing and associated DRO requirements for areas outside of the Coastal Zone.

In the Midcoast, the Coastsides Design Review Committee (CDRC) would continue its discretionary design review of projects that are not subject to State streamlining. (Note that, to date, qualifying ADUs are the only housing type subject to mandatory ministerial review in the Coastal Zone).

Adoption of the ordinance will enable the County to apply design review standards to ADUs and other State-streamlined housing types that have been largely approved without design standards since the adoption of State laws described above. Compliance with the updated ordinance will increase compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods while still facilitating streamlined processing and approval. State law generally requires ministerial review of these qualifying housing projects, effectively prohibiting public comment periods, potential hearings, and appeals associated with discretionary review procedures.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Planning Commission recommend that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Determine that the project is exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, under Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the “common sense exemption”;
2. Adopt the ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 of the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) and adopting related zoning text amendments for various zoning districts for consistency with the new ordinance.
3. Adopt a resolution directing staff to submit the ordinance to the Coastal Commission.
4. Adopt a resolution amending the Planning and Building Department’s Planning Services Fee Schedule to revise design review related fees.

### **BACKGROUND**

Chronology:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
Summer 2025	- County’s release of draft design standards for review by Bayside Design Review Committee (BDRC) and Coastsides Design Review Committee. The BDRC reviewed the standards at their September and October 2025 public meetings. The CDRC reviewed the standards at their August, September, and October 2025 public meetings.

- October 22, 2025 - Staff presented to the Midcoast Community Council (MCC), with discussion focused on standards regulating exterior lighting.
- January 28, 2026 - Planning Commission recommends adoption of the ordinance, directing staff to address public comments regarding bird strike-proofing windows and color rating limits for exterior lighting.
- February 11, 2026 - Staff presented to the MCC, with further discussion of design standards with focus on standards regulating exterior lighting.
- March 12, 2026 - Coastal Commission approved the County's proposed Local Coastal Program (LCP) Amendment to renumber and reorganize its Planning and Subdivision Regulations, Building Regulations, and Natural Resources Protection sections as de minimis, negating the need for separate references to the Design Review Regulations in and outside of the Coastal Zone.
- April 7, 2026 - The Board of Supervisors did not consider the ordinance and continued public hearing for this item to a date uncertain.
  - Subsequently, in response to public comments directed to members of the Board of Supervisors and further analysis by staff, staff revised the design standard pertaining to bird safety standards for glass and railings and exterior lighting, limiting application of the color rating limit for single-family residences to new construction and major remodels/additions only, and excluding application to existing residences not undertaking a major remodel/addition. No change is proposed to application of the standard for commercial, industrial, or multi-family residential properties.
- April 30, 2026 - Staff met with Green Foothills staff and bird safety advocates to discuss changes to the bird safety design standard.
- May 13, 2026 - Planning Commission public hearing

**DISCUSSION**

A. CHANGES MADE TO THE DRAFT ORDINANCE AFTER THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S REVIEW ON JANUARY 28, 2026

At its meeting on January 28, 2026, the Planning Commission reviewed the ordinance and received public comment. The following is a discussion of the design review standards related to exterior lighting (Section G) and windows, doors, and decks (Section E), the two areas where staff is proposing changes to the ordinance:

1. Exterior Lighting

At the Planning Commission hearing, four members of the public spoke regarding the color rating limits for exterior lighting and written comments were submitted (Attachment B). Standard G3 of the draft ordinance reviewed by the Planning Commission required that:

Ordinance Language presented to the Planning Commission on January 28, 2026:

*“All exterior lighting shall use warm, yellow light tones with a color rating of 2,200 Kelvin (k) or lower.”*

In response to a public comment from an interested party to the Planning Commission that stated that a 2,200 kelvin (k) color rating is actually quite orange and very warm, and that a high threshold such as 3,000k may be easier for homeowners to achieve while still achieving dark-sky compliance, staff recommended in its presentation to the Planning Commission that the ordinance establish a threshold of 2,200k for new and existing commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential development, and a 3,000k limit for new and existing single-family residential development. Other public speakers at the Planning Commission advocated for a consistent limit of 2,200k for all development to reduce night sky impacts.

Planning Commission Recommendation

The Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt the ordinance, and directed staff to address bird-strike proofing measures for buildings (see discussion in Section A.2 below) and to prepare pros-and-cons analysis for the Board of Supervisors of 2,200k, 2,700k, and 3,000k color rating limit options. The analysis of the various lighting color rating limits is presented in the table below.

<b>Potential Color Rating Limit Options</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<b>2,200k maximum limit</b> <i>Level provides a very warm, amber-toned light</i>	<i>Warmest tone of yellow of the three options, with lowest level of dark sky impacts, but still compliant with dark sky standards</i>	<i>Adoption of this option would set the lowest level, potentially causing a significant number of properties with non-compliant lighting to be in violation</i>

<b>2,700k maximum limit</b> <i>Level provides warm, soft, and inviting light with golden undertones</i>	<i>Cooler tone of yellow of the options with somewhat higher level of dark sky impacts, but still compliant with dark sky standards</i>	<i>Adoption of this option would set a somewhat higher limit, potentially causing a lesser number of properties with non-compliant lighting to be in violation</i>
<b>3,000k maximum limit</b> <i>Level often called "warm white"</i>	<i>Cooler tone of yellow of the options with higher level of dark sky impacts, but still compliant with dark sky standards.</i>	<i>Adoption of this option would set the highest kelvin limit, potentially causing the fewest properties with non-compliant lighting to be in violation</i>

After the Planning Commission’s Review

In its letter dated March 25, 2026, the Midcoast Community Council opposed setting two separate limits based on use and recommended the application of a 2,200k limit for all uses, citing the wide availability of 2,200k light fixtures, and impact of blue-toned light on the night sky and birds.

In response to the MCC letter, other public comments, and further analysis, staff has revised Standard G3 of the ordinance to require that all development comply with the 2,200k color rating limit, except that, for single-family residential use, the standard would only apply to new construction and major remodel/addition projects. The revision is intended to address concerns regarding financial impact to elderly homeowners with older houses and light fixtures by excluding existing homes from application of Standard G3, unless those homes are undertaking a major remodel/addition. A major remodel or addition that would require compliance with the lighting standard would be an activity that meets the definition of a “Major Repair, Remodel or Upgrade” in Section 8.388.020.9 of the Zoning Regulations, as follows: “[a]ny combination of activities intended to repair, rehabilitate, upgrade or otherwise extend the usable life of an existing structure that amounts to 50% or more of the structure’s value, as determined by the most current Building Valuation Data published by the International Conference of Building Officials.”

Proposed Revised Language (added language underlined):

*All exterior lighting shall use warm, yellow light tones with a color rating of 2,200k or lower. This standard applies to all development, with the following exception: for single-family residential use/development, this standard only applies to new construction and Major Repair, Remodel or Upgrades, as defined in Section 8.388.020.9, of existing single-family residences.*

2. Bird-Friendly Transparent Surface Treatment

At its meeting on January 28, 2026, the Planning Commission reviewed the ordinance and received public comment. Lennie Roberts, representing Green Foothills, recommended the addition of bird-strike proofing measures for buildings. In its vote to recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt the ordinance, the Planning Commission directed staff to address bird-strike proofing measures for buildings.

Lennie Roberts subsequently referred staff to Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D., Environmental Advocate, Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance, a knowledgeable member of the public and advocate for bird-safe building treatments. Staff met with Green Foothills staff and Dr. Kleinhaus on April 30, 2026. Dr. Kleinhaus outlined options for satisfying the bird-safe requirements, including the use of lower-cost bird-safe window film (see Attachment E). In response to email communications and meeting discussion, staff added a recommendation (containing the definition of bird-friendly treatment) for all projects and Standard E2 pertaining to larger projects, as described below, to the draft ordinance:

Proposed Recommendation Language:

J. Use bird-friendly treatment on windows, glass railings, and other transparent exterior surfaces (“surfaces”) to minimize bird strikes.

Bird-friendly treatment is defined as one of the following:

- (1) One of the following treatments applied to surfaces:
  - a) opaque 1/4” dots or 1/8” lines with 2×2” spacing;
  - b) low-reflectance opaque materials; or
  - c) non-glass double-skin facades;
- (2) Permanent patterns or coatings built into surface, such as Acid-Etched or Fritted Glass or UV-Reflective Coated Glass (appears opaque to birds (who see UV light) but transparent to humans); or
- (3) Screens or solar shading (e.g. external blinds, shutters, or rollers that can be moved based on the sun's position).

Proposed Standard Language:

Bird-friendly treatment, as defined in Section 8.256.170 (J) or other equivalent alternative design measure, subject to approval by the Director of Planning and Building, is required on 90% of windows and other transparent exterior surfaces for:

- (1) All new planned developments (e.g., residential subdivisions);
- (2) Portions of new single-family and multifamily homes that exceed 30 feet above grade;
- (3) New commercial, institutional, and industrial construction projects;

(4) Additions and existing development that replace 50% or more of the existing exterior glass shall be subject to requirements pertaining to new construction for the relevant use type as listed above.

In addition, bird-friendly treatment is required on the entirety of the following new or replaced features, regardless of building height: glass railings, areas with transparent corners, fly-through features, and all surfaces above a green roof.

Exemptions: 100% affordable multifamily housing, first-floor storefronts, and all operable sash windows.

In an email dated April 4, 2026 (Attachment F), Natalie Hyland, Architect, questioned whether posts/newels breaking up large areas of glass could be considered a bird-friendly treatment. Staff's research indicates that posts on glass railings can serve as a partial, but often insufficient, bird-safe treatment. While structural posts break up some transparency, they generally do not meet the American Bird Conservancy's recommended "2x4" rule—markings spaced 2 inches apart vertically and 4 inches apart horizontally—needed to effectively prevent collisions.

In its letter dated March 25, 2026 (Attachment D), the Midcoast Community Council requested that the standard also require anti-glare window treatment for new construction and remodel/additions. While bird-friendly windows are not inherently anti-glare, many effective solutions, such as fritted glass, frosted films, and external screens, simultaneously reduce glare, improve energy efficiency, and prevent bird collisions.

In addition to the changes described above, staff also made minor text and formatting changes to the ordinance for clarity and presentation.

## B. ALTERNATIVES

In addition to the recommended action, the Planning Commission may choose to continue its review of the ordinance to request additional information;; or recommend adoption of the ordinance with amendment(s).

## ATTACHMENTS

- A. Revised Draft Ordinance
- B. Comments from Planning Commission meeting on January 28, 2026.
- C. Staff Report from Planning Commission meeting on January 28, 2026.
- D. Email from Midcoast Community Council to Board of Supervisors for its April 7, 2026 hearing, dated March 25, 2026.

- E. Email from Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D., Environmental Advocate, Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance, dated April 11, 2026.
- F. Comments from continued Board of Supervisors meeting of April 7, 2026.



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT A

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO,**  
**STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

\* \* \* \* \*

**AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REPLACING CHAPTER 8.256 OF  
THE SAN MATEO COUNTY ORDINANCE CODE (ZONING REGULATIONS)  
REGULATING DESIGN REVIEW (DR) DISTRICTS, AND  
ADOPTING RELATED CONFORMING ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California,

**ORDAINS** as follows

**SECTION 1.**

**Findings.** The Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo (“County”) hereby finds and declares as follows:

**WHEREAS**, in 1976, the County adopted an ordinance establishing Design Review (DR) Districts, now codified as Chapter 8.256 of the County Ordinance Code (referred to as “Design Review District regulations”); and

**WHEREAS**, the County’s Design Review District regulations, including standards for design, have been amended on multiple occasions since adoption; and

**WHEREAS**, the County’s Design Review District regulations apply to the unincorporated areas of Emerald Lake Hills and Oak Knoll Manor, Devonshire, Palomar Park, Midcoast, and other unincorporated areas of the County designated as a Design Review District; and

**WHEREAS**, the current design review standards include many standards that are subjective, making such standards difficult to apply consistently and efficiently; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2019 the State legislature declared a State housing shortage crisis and enacted legislation streamlining municipal permitting of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) including limiting application of design review standards to objective standards; and

**WHEREAS**, the State legislature subsequently enacted other legislation streamlining municipal permitting of other housing types, similarly limiting application of design review standards to objective standards; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments to the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) would update standards for design to objective standards that can be applied in compliance with State law; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments to the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) would simplify the design review process by consolidating standards, clarifying confusing standards, and allowing for more design flexibility to reflect contemporary styles; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2025, the County's Bayside and Coastside Design Review committees reviewed and provided feedback to Planning staff regarding the updated standards for design over several public meetings; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors has determined that adoption of the ordinance repealing and replacing the Design Review District regulations, and making conforming changes to other portions of the Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the "common sense exemption," in that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment, and

adoption of objective design standards would not cause a physical change in the environment and therefore would not have a significant effect on the environment; and

**WHEREAS**, the County Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing on January 28, 2026, and May 13, 2026, received public comment, and recommended that the Board of Supervisors adopt the ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, the ordinance is consistent with the County's Local Coastal Program as described in the Board memorandum accompanying this ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, the ordinance constitutes an amendment to the Local Coastal Program and therefore must be reviewed and certified by the California Coastal Commission prior to taking effect in the coastal zone; and

**WHEREAS**, on adoption by the Board of Supervisors, the ordinance will be submitted to the California Coastal Commission for review and certification; and

**WHEREAS**, the ordinance will ensure that the County's regulations are consistent with State law, easier to interpret and implement, and facilitate streamlined permitting of housing projects.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California, ordains as follows:

## **SECTION 2.**

Chapter 8.256 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) is hereby repealed and replaced in its entirety by a new Chapter 8.256 to be numbered and entitled to read as follows:

### **8.256.010. ESTABLISHMENT, PURPOSE, AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT OF DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT.**

- A. In any district which is combined with the “DR” District, the regulations of this Chapter shall apply, except as qualified by Section 8.256.010.B.
- B. On parcels zoned Neighborhood Business District (C-1), Resource Management-Coastal Zone (RM-CZ), or Planned Agricultural District (PAD) located in the Midcoast LCP Update Project Area, as shown on the map that is a part of this Chapter, the regulations of this Chapter shall apply only to residential development. If any portion of a structure is used for residential purposes, the entire structure is subject to Design Review.
- C. In addition to the regulations set forth in Chapter 8.444, proceedings to determine whether the application of these regulations should be extended to additional geographic areas may be initiated by a petition of the majority of the property owners in a given area. Upon receipt of such a petition, the Director of Planning and Building shall set a date of hearing thereof, and give a notice as set forth in Chapter 8.444 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code.
- D. In establishing the Design Review District, the Board of Supervisors hereby determines that:

1. Many communities, neighborhoods and areas in this County have benefitted from the consistent application of design standards, which require the erection of buildings and structures that relate to the sites, are compatible with the character of the neighborhood, and sensitive to the natural environment, especially areas with unique environmental and/or resource value.
2. These conditions promote harmony, and benefit public health, comfort, convenience, happiness and welfare.
3. It is necessary and desirable to provide guidelines and criteria for the maintenance and enhancement of the visual character of especially unique communities, the natural environmental resources, and the public health, safety, comfort, convenience, happiness and welfare of the citizens of the County.
4. The review procedures of this Chapter are intended to preserve and enhance the visual character of especially unique communities, the natural environmental resources, and the public health, safety, comfort, convenience, happiness, and welfare of the citizens of the County.

E. The purposes of this Chapter are to:

1. Provide a method by which the County may encourage builders to develop land so that its value and attractiveness will endure.
2. Encourage development of private property in harmony with the desired and established character of the community or area in

conformance with an adopted set of community design principles as well as the County General Plan, the Local Coastal Program (where applicable), and other precise plans.

3. Encourage residential development that has individual character, while also ensuring that it is complementary with neighboring houses, the neighborhood character of each community, and the surrounding natural setting.
4. Preserve and enhance the visual character of communities and natural resources.
5. Improve the general standards of orderly and stable development in the County through review of the design of individual buildings, structures and their setting.
6. Improve and augment the regulations now included in ordinances related to planning, building and health in order to promote development which is in the best interest to the public health, safety and welfare of the County.
7. Establish standards and policies that will promote, preserve, and enhance building design, proper site development, and other environmental characteristics in designated communities and areas.
8. Establish clear and objective standards that are easy to understand and consistently implement and enforce.

It is not the purpose of this Chapter that regulation of design should be so rigidly interpreted that individual initiative is precluded in the design of any particular building or substantial additional expense is incurred. It is the intent of this Chapter that any regulation exercised shall be that necessary to achieve the overall objectives of this Chapter.

- F. The legislative intent of this Chapter is to:
1. Establish design standards that implement relevant policies of the County General Plan and the Local Coastal Program (LCP).
  2. Identify that it shall be the responsibility of the applicant and home designer to comply with both the Design Standards and the Zoning Regulations development standards (e.g., height limit, maximum floor area, setbacks and maximum parcel coverage). The emphasis for design review will be on a home's appearance, not on its actual size or height. As such, compliance with design standards will be achieved by requiring design techniques consistent with zoning development standards and, where applicable, LCP policies, that make homes with the unique design characteristics of the community it is located within.
  3. Address the relationship of Design Review Standards to other relevant County ordinances and regulations, which include, but are not limited to: (1) the Building Regulations, which establish construction requirements including structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing requirements; (2) Department of Public

Works standards for driveways, curb cuts and other work in the public right-of-way; (3) the Protected Tree Ordinance, which establish criteria for tree removal; and (4) the Grading Ordinance, which establishes standards for conducting grading activity. Where conflicts exist between the provisions of this Chapter and the policies of the LCP, the policies of the LCP shall control.

4. Ensure that this Chapter will be enforced in a manner that is consistent with State law.

**8.256.020. ESTABLISHMENT OF DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE, DESIGN REVIEW ADMINISTRATOR AND DESIGN REVIEW OFFICER.**

- A. There is hereby established a Coastside Design Review Committee consisting of three members to be appointed by the Board of Supervisors.
  1. Appointments shall be for three-year terms, except that the initial members shall be appointed to a one-year, a two-year and a three-year term so that subsequently one appointment shall expire each year. The Board of Supervisors may adjust the terms of any appointment to ensure such overlap in terms occurs.
  2. Members shall be residents of San Mateo County. Two members shall be licensed architects or landscape architects. The third member shall be a resident of the unincorporated community in which the project being reviewed is located. If the member from the unincorporated community in which the project being reviewed is

located is not available, the nearest residing member of the CDRC to the project location may act on the project.

3. Two members present shall constitute a quorum and two votes shall be required for action.
4. The Board of Supervisors will appoint alternates for each member with the same terms and qualifications.
5. The Coastside Design Review Committee shall adopt rules for the conduct of its business and a conflict of interest code.
6. Members shall be paid \$100.00 per meeting not to exceed \$200.00 per month.

B. The Director of Planning and Building is the Design Review Administrator (DRA) and may appoint in writing assistant(s) to act as Design Review Officer(s), who may exercise all of the powers of the Design Review Administrator.

#### **8.256.030. REQUIREMENT FOR DESIGN REVIEW AND APPROVAL.**

This Chapter shall apply in any district which is combined with the DR District, and shall apply to all new exterior alteration or construction. All applicable activities shall be reviewed for conformance with this Chapter. No such applicable activity shall commence unless the design of the project has been approved.

#### **8.256.040. EXEMPTIONS.**

The DRA may exempt activities which otherwise require a ministerial or discretionary design review process as allowed in this Chapter. Such activities

shall be listed and described in exemption guidance prepared by the DRA.

Exempt projects shall be those that are determined to be minor in nature and in substantial compliance with design standards applicable to the property or structure in question, as determined by the DRA.

- 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 which are not eligible for an over-the-counter exemption may receive a formal exemption from Design Review if the project is new construction that is 500 square feet or less and complies with setbacks, and construction is under 16 feet in height in the Midcoast.
- 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 on exemptions shall be final.

**8.256.041. APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO MINISTERIAL REVIEW.**

A. Applicable Areas: Review of projects in the following areas shall be subject to a ministerial process:

1. Emerald Lake Hills and Oak Knoll Manor (areas zoned RH/DR only)
2. Palomar Park
3. Devonshire

B. Process:

1. No separate permit shall be required.
2. Applicant shall complete a Planning Permit Application form. If a building permit is required for the project, completion of the building permit application form is sufficient.
3. The burden shall be on the property owner, project designer and permit applicant to demonstrate that the design of the project conforms to the standards and guidelines for design review applicable to the location of the project.
4. The applicant shall provide plans and specifications that accurately reflect the entire exterior appearance of the proposal and associated site work. The DRA may require additional information as determined to be necessary for evaluation of the development plans for compliance with applicable design standards.

5. The DRA's ministerial decision regarding compliance with design standards is final and is not appealable.

**8.256.045. APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO DISCRETIONARY REVIEW.**

- A. Applicable Areas: Action on an application for a Design Review Permit for projects in the following areas shall be discretionary and by the specified decision maker:
  1. Review or action on an application for a Design Review Permit shall be taken by the Coastside Design Review Committee, following the discretionary procedure outlined in this Section, for projects located in the Midcoast on parcels in the Midcoast LCP Update Project Area. This section applies to development with a residential component only (i.e., single-family or multiple-family residential construction, residential/commercial mixed-use development).
  2. In all other areas within the Design Review District in the Coastal Zone, and for projects with no residential component in the Midcoast LCP Update Project Area, review or action on an application for a Design Review permit shall be taken by the Design Review Administrator.
  3. When the project in question requires another permit or approval, such as (but not limited to) a use permit, variance or subdivision, to be acted upon by the Director of Planning and Building, Zoning Hearing Officer, Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, then the action of the Coastside Design Review Committee or

Design Review Administrator shall be in the form of a recommendation to the decision-maker on the other permit(s), who shall act upon the application for design review only after receiving and considering such recommendation. In such cases, the decision-maker may refer any revisions to the design of the project back to the Coastside Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator for further recommendation prior to taking action on the project.

4. The Coastside Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator may refer any matter directly to the Planning Commission when, in their opinion, such action will be in the public interest.

- B. Pre-Design Conference. Prior to beginning design of a project in the Design Review District subject to Section 8.256.045 and submitting an application for Design Review, the project owner, or their designer or other designee, shall request and shall participate in a pre-design conference with the Design Review Administrator. During the pre-design conference, staff shall identify zoning regulations and design review standards and guidelines applicable to the property and project in question, shall review the applicable design review process, and shall answer any associated questions. The intent of the pre-design conference is to ensure that the designer and owner are aware of the design standards and County requirements and processes prior to submittal of a permit application.

C. Application Requirements. Applications for a Design Review Permit shall be submitted as specified by the Design Review Administrator who shall prescribe the format and scope of all applications and establish filing deadlines subject to any provisions of State law or County ordinances or policies.

The application for a Design Review Permit shall contain or be accompanied by materials as listed and specified in an application submittal checklist as supplied by the Design Review Administrator, including but not limited to the following information. Plans and specifications submitted with an application for design review shall accurately reflect the entire exterior appearance of the proposal and associated site work.

1. Location map
2. Site plan:
3. Building elevations, including color of materials or finish:
4. Floor Plans
5. Roof Plan
6. Tree Plan showing proposed tree removals and required replacement trees.
7. A stamped boundary survey as required by County policy
8. Exterior Lighting
9. Landscape plans for new homes (not ADUs).

10. Project data table showing calculations necessary to demonstrate compliance with applicable development standards of the applicable zoning district.
11. Plans showing proposed grading (cut and fill) and the total amount of grading in cubic yards.
12. Demonstration of Scale (for applications subject to Section 8.256.045 (Discretionary Review) for consideration by the Coastside Design Review Committee)
  - a. Applicant shall visually demonstrate project scale using story poles at the project site.
  - b. For smaller scale projects, as defined below, alternative methods to demonstrate scale (such as digital imaging simulations, virtual or augmented reality simulations, and/or other visual techniques) may be used. Smaller scale projects include:
    - (1) New buildings and additions that are 800 sq. ft. or less in size, which meet criteria below:
      - (a.) Meets setback requirements;
      - (b.) Less than 16 feet in height; or Ground-floor additions; or Second or third-story additions that do not alter the roofline of an existing structure;

- (2) Projects that are not visible from public streets or neighboring residences within 50 feet, based on staff determination.
- c. Story poles shall be constructed according to the following specifications:
- (1) Story poles shall be placed at all outside building corners and along the highest roof ridgeline. The elevation of the lowest finished floor and highest ridge shall be visibly marked on the pole. In order to identify the building envelope and the ridgeline, netting shall be extended on grade, from one corner pole to the other and atop one pole to another along the direction of the ridgeline, respectively. The netting used shall be orange snow fencing material, or comparable netting, measuring at least 24 inches in width.
  - (2) The story pole material shall be constructed of 2"x4" lumber or other sturdy material and should be properly braced and supported to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public. Story poles shall be independently supported, whenever possible.
  - (3) The applicant shall affix a tape measure to the vertical pole supporting the highest point of the project. The tape measure shall be installed upside down so that

the maximum height of the project is displayed at the bottom of the pole. Story poles shall not require survey or certification.

- d. The applicant is not required to modify story poles to reflect changes to the design of the project as a result of the CDRC public hearing(s).
- e. Story poles shall remain in place for at least one CDRC hearing and may be removed prior to a decision on the project. Prior to removal of the story poles, the applicant shall take photos of all sides of the story poles and shall send photos to the DRO and project planner. Story poles shall be removed no later than seven days following a CDRC decision or recommendation on the application.

- 13. Fees as set by resolution of the Board of Supervisors.

The Design Review Administrator may require additional information as necessary for evaluation of the development plans.

D. Public Hearing and Comment.

- 1. Applicants shall complete the demonstration of scale requirements and post the required notice at least 10 calendar days prior to the scheduled Coastside Design Review Committee hearing date, unless the Coastside Design Review Committee finds a shorter duration is acceptable.

2. The Coastside Design Review Committee shall hold a public hearing to receive comments on the project. Such hearings shall be sufficiently structured to ensure that the comments of any interested person are considered and recorded prior to action, but shall be conducted in a manner which encourages the free and informal exchange of ideas between the owner, project designer, and the Coastside Design Review Committee.

E. Notice.

1. Public notice of each application for Design Review shall be provided at least 10 calendar days prior to any of the following:
  - a. Public hearing and action by the Coastside Design Review Committee on a Design Review Permit application.
  - b. Public hearing and recommendation by the Coastside Design Review Committee to another decision-maker on a Design Review Permit application.
  - c. Action by the Design Review Administrator on a Design Review Permit application.
2. Notice shall be provided by written mailed notice to:
  - a. The owner of the property which is the subject of the application.
  - b. The project applicant as listed on the application.
  - c. All owners of property, as shown on the last equalized assessment roll, within 300 feet (or the notification area

required for any other permit required for the project, whichever is greater) of the exterior limits of the subject property.

3. A notice of a pending application for Design Review under this Section shall be conspicuously posted at eye level at the front of the property nearest the street. Such notices shall be on forms provided by the County. This notice shall be posted at least 10 calendar days prior to a decision.
4. Written notice of the findings and the decision on an application for Design Review under this Section shall be mailed to the applicant by first-class mail at the address set forth in the application and to any other person who has filed a written request therefore with the Design Review Administrator.

F. Findings and Decision.

1. The burden shall be on the property owner, project designer and permit applicant to demonstrate that the design of the project conforms to the standards and guidelines for design review applicable to the location of the project.
2. Action on an application for Design Review under this Section shall be to: (a) approve the application and plans as submitted, (b) approve them with modifications, (c) continue review of the application to allow the applicant to address concerns, as specified

by the Coastside Design Review Committee at a hearing pursuant to Section 8.256.045.D, or (c) disapprove the application and plans.

3. In acting on an application for Design Review Permit, the Coastside Design Review Committee, the Design Review Administrator or other decision-maker on the application shall make written findings stating how and why the project does or does not conform to the standards and guidelines for design review applicable to the project.
4. In making such findings, the decision-maker shall apply the following principles:
  - a. Regulation of design should not be so rigidly enforced that individual initiative is precluded in the design of any particular building or substantial additional expense incurred. The regulation exercised should be that necessary to achieve the overall objectives as set forth in Section 8.256.010.
  - b. Appropriate design is based upon the suitability of a building for its purposes, upon the appropriate use of sound materials and upon the principles of harmony and proportion in the elements of the building.
  - c. Appropriate design is not based on economic factors alone.

G. Appeals.

1. Discretionary decisions on Design Review, made by the Coastside Design Review Committee, the Design Review Administrator or the Zoning Hearing Officer may be appealed to the Planning Commission within 10 working days only by aggrieved persons. Notice of the public hearing shall be provided as specified in Section 8.256.045. The Planning Commission shall review and consider points of appeal for each Design Review application. The decision of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors following the same procedures as for appeals to the Planning Commission.
2. For purposes of this section, “aggrieved person” means any person who, in person or through a representative, appeared at a public hearing or by other appropriate means prior to action on an application for Design Review and informed the County of their concerns about an application for such permit or who for good cause was unable to do either, and who objects to the action taken on such permit and wishes to appeal such action to a higher authority.

H. Amendment.

1. Subsequent to the completion of Design Review pursuant to Sections 8.256.041 and 8.256.045, the Design Review Administrator may approve amendments to the approved plans which, in the judgment of the Design Review Administrator, are

minor in nature, without the public notice, hearing or appeal otherwise required or authorized by this Chapter. Such approval shall be in writing. Other amendments shall be processed as for new applications.

2. Minor amendments may include, but are not limited to: interior modifications; relocations of doors and windows; adjustments in roof pitch or design; minor relocations of walls, fences or signs; and other adjustments in design, all only to the extent that they will not, in the judgment of the Design Review Administrator, have an adverse effect on compliance with design standards or guidelines or zoning regulations applicable to the project.

I. Expiration.

1. Design approvals granted pursuant to Section 8.256.045 shall expire five years from the date of the final approval of a Design Review Permit if all other permits required for the project have not been obtained and construction begun.
2. Upon written request of the property owner, and for good cause, the Design Review Administrator may extend the expiration date for design approvals one year at a time.

**8.256.046.Exceptions.**

A. Minor Exceptions:

For discretionary permits, the Coastside Design Review Committee may approve a minor design exception from the standards in Section

8.256.180 upon finding that an application is in substantial conformance with the design review standards.

For ministerial design approvals, a minor design exception from the standards in Sections 8.256.180 may be granted by the DRA upon making the following findings:

That the exception 1) is necessary for compliance with the site planning and design requirements; 2) will not jeopardize public safety; 3) is in substantial conformance with the design review standards; 4) will be compatible with the neighborhood surrounding the parcel, and 5) will not be detrimental to the public welfare.

The DRA may require modifications to the proposal, including design, location, materials, colors, and landscaping requirements. The DRA's decision on an exception authorized by this Section shall not require a public hearing. The DRA's decision may be appealed to the Planning Commission, as specified in Section 8.256.045.

- B. Major Exceptions: The Planning Commission, at a public hearing, may grant a use permit to grant an exception from any provision in this Chapter which is not a minor design exception, subject to the findings listed in Section 8.256.046.A.

**8.256.140. INSPECTION, OCCUPANCY, AND MAINTENANCE.**

Before a certificate of occupancy, building permit final approval, or final approval is issued, the completed project must be inspected for compliance with the approved plans. Building design (including size, shape, height) shall be

maintained as approved. Approved landscaping shall be maintained in healthy condition for the life of the project; trees and plants that have died shall be replaced.

**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.

**8.256.142. GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING APPLICATION OF DESIGN STANDARDS.**

A. Background.

1. Application

This section is intended to provide a detailed discussion of principles for applying applicable standards for a project as outlined in this Chapter, where not all principles are applicable to development in all design review areas.

Where used in this document, the terms “house,” “home” and “single-family” shall also refer to two-family or duplex residential development.

The design standards are intended for use by homeowners, builders, architects and designers, by neighbors, and by community groups in their consideration of new single-family homes and additions to existing homes. The Design Review Administrator, the

Coastside Design Review Committee, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will also use these standards in their review of projects, as set forth in this Chapter

The discussion and illustrations provided here are intended to explain the reasons for the standards and to provide further clarification of the standards' objectives. Illustrations represent examples of how standards may be applied to a design style and are not intended to restrict the range of potential design styles.

B. Neighborhood definition and neighborhood character.

1. Neighborhood Definition

**Definition:** A neighborhood is defined as the area within 300 feet of an existing or proposed house. Certain factors may be present which would further define or alter the limit of a neighborhood, making it larger or smaller, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Significant changes in topography;
- b. Changes in land use such as from residential to commercial;
- c. Proximity to designated open space or urban/rural boundary;
- d. Changes in the land subdivision pattern;
- e. A wide street or natural feature such as a riparian corridor;
- f. Noticeable changes in building type, such as from one-story to two-story homes;

g. Visibility from off-site vantage points in the vicinity of the project.

2. Neighborhood Context

**Discussion:** What is a neighborhood? One of the first steps in designing a new home or an addition to an existing home is to understand the neighborhood in which the home is located. A neighborhood generally has two components: (1) the immediate context, or how a house relates to adjacent houses and natural features, and (2) the neighborhood context, or how a house relates to the visual character and scale of other houses and natural features in the vicinity.

3. Neighborhood Character

**Discussion:** What is neighborhood character? Neighborhood character is the combination of qualities or features within a neighborhood that distinguishes it from another neighborhood. For the purposes of these design standards, the key qualities or features of single-family residential neighborhoods include the appearance of the homes (e.g., architectural style and elements), the collective appearance of the homes (e.g., pattern, scale, size), and the appearance of natural features (e.g., natural vegetation, landforms).

How does a house contribute to the visual character of a neighborhood? The architectural elements of a house such as its

shape, the arrangement of its doors and windows, its roof style, and its architectural style all contribute to the appearance of the house, which in turn contributes to the collective appearance or character of the neighborhood. Some of the most common architectural elements that contribute to the character of an individual house and the collective character of the neighborhood are listed below:

- a. How houses are sited on their lots;
- b. How houses blend with surrounding scenic and natural environments;
- c. Architectural style, including how house styles compare, contrast or complement each other;
- d. Scale, or the appearance or proportion of a house relative to others, including the number of stories;
- e. Arrangement/placement/massing of major building forms;
- f. Parking and garage patterns;
- g. Location of entries;
- h. Roof forms;
- i. Exterior materials and colors;
- j. Window type and placement;
- k. Landscaping;
- l. Older buildings or features having historic character.

C. Site planning and structure placement.

One of the key elements that define the visual character of an individual house and the neighborhood is how it is located or placed on its site. A single building out of context with its site or neighboring houses can appear disruptive.

1. Integrate Structures with the Natural Setting

New houses, additions and accessory structures should be located, designed and constructed to retain and blend with the natural vegetation and natural landforms of the site, and should be complementary to adjacent neighborhood structures.

a. Trees and Vegetation

**Discussion:** When siting a new home or an addition on a parcel, the goal should be to disturb as little vegetation as possible, with priority placed on retaining healthy, native species and those trees that are protected trees by definition. Fire prevention measures, such as defensible space requirements, should also be considered.

b. Grading

**Discussion:** As defined in the County Grading Ordinance, grading is any excavating, filling, or placement of earth materials or a combination of these activities. Excavation (or cutting) is the mechanical removal of earth material, while filling is the deposit of earth or waste material placed by artificial means. The following design standards are intended

to regulate the aesthetic aspects of grading; the technical aspects of grading are regulated by the County Grading Ordinance. In the interest of retaining as much of the natural character of the site as possible, an effort should be made to place structures so that grading activity and the area disturbed by grading is limited; however, on sloping sites and where a basement is proposed, it is recognized that a certain amount of excavation may be necessary so that the end result is a house that blends into the site.

c. Streams and Other Drainage Features

**Discussion:** Some areas of the Midcoast are crossed by a number of streams. In the Midcoast, as well as in Emerald Lake Hills, Devonshire, and Palomar Park, many less developed drainage features including swales, gullies and ditches cross the area. In the Coastal Zone, if there is a stream or other drainage feature on or adjacent to your property, you should consult the Local Coastal Program Sensitive Habitats Component for policies related to sensitive habitats, riparian corridors and wetlands to determine if these policies apply.

All streams and natural drainage features should be avoided when deciding where structures should be placed to protect them from erosion, siltation and polluted runoff. Man-made

drainage features may be covered or relocated in order to conform with the design standards of this section, provided that: (1) sensitive habitats are not disturbed and (2) alterations are done pursuant to a drainage plan prepared by a registered civil engineer and reviewed and approved by the Planning and Building Division.

Builders should also take advantage of the opportunity to improve local storm drainage systems and protect streams and drainage features from erosion, siltation, and polluted runoff by improving water retention and movement on site, prohibiting runoff onto neighboring properties, and preventing overloading of local stormwater systems. Please refer to Chapter 8.256.180 for guidelines regarding landscaping and paved areas that should be used to enhance project appearance and stormwater pollution control. Please also refer to the County's Drainage Manual for specific requirements.

d. **Ridgelines, Skylines and View Corridors**

**Discussion:** The varied terrain of hillside design review communities offers scenic views of the ocean, in the case of the Midcoast, and the hills, that should be protected.

The County's General Plan and the LCP Visual Resources Component contain policies protecting ridgelines and

skylines. Ridgelines are the tops of hills or hillocks normally viewed against a background of other hills. A skyline is the line where sky and land masses meet. Both private and public views should be considered. A public view is a range of vision from a public road or other public facility, such as the significant public views in the Midcoast from the Cabrillo Highway Scenic Corridor (see Planning GIS Map). It is important to note that, for areas in the Coastal Zone, the LCP may require the maximum building height for structures located on a ridgeline or skyline to be lower than the maximum allowed by the Zoning Regulations.

e. Relationship to Open Spaces

**Discussion:** In some areas of Montara in the Midcoast, the neighborhood's proximity to designated open space is one of the factors which defines the neighborhood character, and special attention should be paid to those transition or buffer areas where residential and open space land uses meet.

2. Complement Other Structures in the Neighborhood

Most home building takes place on "infill" lots - vacant parcels next to developed lots with existing homes. As such, careful attention must be paid to the placement, orientation and design of new homes and additions to ensure that they are complementary to other homes in the neighborhood.

a. Privacy

**Discussion:** Privacy is one of the keys to a property owner's enjoyment of their property and their quality of life. The placement of a new home or an addition, and/or the location of windows on a new home or an addition, can have a significant impact on privacy, both for the neighbors and for the occupants of the new home. Decks and balconies can provide outdoor living space and add architectural interest to a home. However, they must be carefully designed to avoid substantially affecting neighbors' privacy. It is particularly important to consider the impact the placement of a new structure, windows, exterior lighting, and/or outdoor deck and patio areas may have on privacy when setbacks are the minimum allowed by the Zoning Regulations. This may involve modifying a proposed floor plan or proposing other architectural solutions or landscaping to enhance privacy. To reduce the potential for future privacy conflicts, a project designer should also consider the probable location and intensity of development that is likely to occur on parcels in the vicinity of the proposed project.

b. Views

**Discussion:** Homes in hillside areas enjoy a variety of views. Some are views of the ocean, others are of the hills,

and others are vistas through the neighborhood. Views add value and enjoyment to a property; however, private views are not protected by existing regulations. Due to the configuration and size of some parcels and their topography, there may be no way to build without affecting someone else's view. However, when designing a new home or an addition, an effort should be made to minimize the effect on views from neighboring houses. Possible methods to minimize view blockage include: locating living space where it would have less view impact, increasing the setback of second stories, lowering roof plate heights, and choosing roof forms that minimize mass. To reduce the potential for future view conflicts, a project designer is encouraged to also consider the probable location and intensity of development that is likely to occur on parcels in the vicinity of the proposed project.

D. Elements of design.

One of the greatest challenges of residential construction is the building of a contemporary home that is compatible with surrounding, older homes of varying styles built during previous eras when the construction of smaller homes, and sometimes homes of lower quality, was more typical. The architectural elements of a house can affect its apparent mass, architectural character, and the visual quality of the neighborhood. Every

effort should be made, by following these guidelines, to place new structures so that they blend with those existing nearby and to achieve a higher quality of design and construction.

Elements of design explored further in this section include: (1) building mass, shape, and scale; (2) architectural styles and facades; (3) roof design; and (4) exterior materials and colors.

#### 1. Building Mass, Shape and Scale

The apparent mass of a building is determined by the actual size of the building, and whether or not the building shapes and facades are simple or broken into more varied forms. With regard to actual size, new homes and additions must meet the building floor area standard set by the Zoning Regulations. However, even a home that complies with this standard may appear massive or bulky, if the building shape and/or facade is too simple. Simple forms may appear more massive and larger, while houses with more variety in their forms could appear less massive and often more interesting. Simple forms may be appropriate in a modernist architectural design. Likewise, long, blank walls may appear more massive than walls with spaces and corners that create shadows and architectural interest. Finally, a house should appear to be proportional, or in “scale,” with other buildings in the neighborhood. The following standards encourage building designs that reduce apparent mass and increase compatibility with the neighborhood.

a. Relationship to Existing Topography

**Discussion:** Many existing lots are on steep slopes, and in many cases, the topography of a site is its key natural characteristic. New homes and major additions should be designed so that the structure will follow the existing contours of the land. A building's appearance of bulk can be reduced by shaping the building forms so that they harmonize rather than contrast with the existing topography. While projects proposing the use of either manufactured homes or stock building plans are not prohibited, such projects may encounter difficulty in conforming to the existing topography and to other design standards.

b. Neighborhood Scale

**Discussion:** "Scale" refers to a relative level or degree, or a proportion or relationship between two things. Neighborhood scale refers to the appearance of a home in relation to other homes in the neighborhood; is it properly related in size, height or other characteristics (shape, level of detail or articulation, etc.) to other homes in the neighborhood? Or is it out of proportion to other homes? As mentioned previously, whether or not a house appears proportional to adjacent homes is determined by the size and height of the house and whether or not the building shapes and facades

are simple or broken into more varied forms. For example, large homes generally look less massive if they have more varied, rather than simple building forms. As such, even homes of different sizes can be in scale with one another if they share other architectural characteristics including building shape, simplicity or complexity of building form, and architectural styles and details. Where adjacent homes are not built to conform to these design standards (e.g., they have little articulation and appear out of proportion, boxy or massive), project designers are encouraged to avoid repeating such mistakes in an effort to be in scale with the neighborhood.

c. **Second Stories**

Most homes built today are two-story homes, and a common way to increase the size of existing homes is to add a second story. This presents a challenge, when the parcel being built on is surrounded primarily by one-story homes, or where a new two-story home or second-story addition has the potential to impact the privacy and views of existing homes. The following sections describe how two-story homes and second-story additions can be designed to be compatible with, and have minimal impact on, existing homes.

(1) Second-Story Location

**Discussion:** Since a second-story over a portion of a house will visually emphasize that area of the home, placing the second-story over just one portion of the home can make it appear unbalanced. Placing the second story over the entire first story can make the home appear boxy. Locating the second story toward the center of the first story and away from property lines results in a more balanced, less boxy appearance and increases light into neighboring properties.

(2) Lowering the Eave Line

**Discussion:** One way to make a two-story home more compatible with its single-story neighbors is to lower the eave line of the second-story roof. Lowering the eave line also ties the two stories of a house together. Setting second-stories back into the area of rooflines is often a solution for meeting Daylight Plane requirements, and it generally will lower the apparent height of the home. Lowering the eave line of the second-story roof can also reduce the apparent building mass, which may result in the scale

of the building being more compatible with its neighborhood.

d. Daylight Plane

**Discussion:** The Daylight Plane requirements contained in the County Zoning Regulations are included below as a starting point for designing a two-story home or a second story addition.

Cornices, canopies, eaves, roof overhangs, chimneys, fire escapes, stairways; landing places; uncovered porches, and similar architectural features may extend into the daylight plane at the front, side, or rear yard, to the extent allowed by Zoning Regulations Chapter 8.340.

Chimneys, pipes, mechanical equipment, antennae, and similar equipment may extend into the daylight plane up to a maximum of 36 feet as required for safety or efficient operation.

Dormers, gables and other architectural features located in the center 60% of the house may extend into the angled portion of the daylight plane, provided that:

- (1) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 40% of the length of that total building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 24 feet.

- (2) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 30% of the length of that building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 28 feet.

e. Wall and Facade Articulation

**Discussion:** Building wall gaps that articulate the walls of the house create shadows and contribute to the architectural character of the home. These changes to the form of a building can have a great effect on the apparent building mass. Longer flat walls generally appear more massive and less interesting. Adding steps and breaks to long or tall walls will reduce apparent mass and add visual interest. Likewise, changes in building materials or colors and architectural details can help break up long or tall walls and keep a house from appearing massive or boxy.

2. Architectural Styles and Features

Many architectural features can affect whether or not a house appears to be compatible with its neighborhood, including building bulk and height, which are discussed in the previous sections.

Other important elements in defining compatibility include architectural style and architectural details, such as window, door, and garage patterns and types.

a. Architectural Style

**Discussion:** When designing a new home or an addition, architectural style should be evaluated by considering what building elements define the architectural style of the house (e.g., building shape, roof design, exterior materials, window size and type, etc.), what defining elements are common to other houses in the neighborhood, and what elements characterize the natural setting (e.g., vegetation, landforms, etc.).

There are many different architectural styles present throughout the Emerald Lake Hills, Devonshire, Palomar Park, Midcoast, and other communities within Design Review Areas. In some neighborhoods, the architectural style is more defined than in others and on some houses it is more apparent than on others. Designing a home and choosing a style that is complementary to adjacent homes can be challenging when the homes are of many different styles, have no defined architectural style or do not conform to these Design Standards (e.g., they have architectural details that are inconsistent or out of proportion for the style). In that case, a project designer should strive for a style that at least is not jarring or disruptive in appearance when compared to adjacent homes, and foster compatibility through other elements of design such as similar building

shapes, exterior materials or colors, window/door styles, and roof massing and design. In the Midcoast, while no particular architectural style is prohibited, a style that reflects the Midcoast's coastal, semi-rural, diverse, small-town character (e.g., coastal craftsman) will more readily be found to be complementary to the neighborhood. Finally, consideration should also be given to the natural setting, and a complementary style chosen depending on whether the site is, for example, steeply sloped, heavily wooded, or more open in character.

b. Openings

**Discussion:** Windows and doors are often the most visually distinctive features on a house. They are a link between private and public space and can provide a sense of security for both. They also can establish an architectural rhythm and affect the apparent mass of the house. There may be a proportion to the openings - vertical or horizontal - that is common to the house or the neighborhood. Dominant window/door materials or style - such as an arched shape or divided windows - should also be considered.

c. Entries

**Discussion:** Front walkways, front doors and windows, and front porches that face the street make for safer

neighborhoods by keeping “eyes on the street” and create a human-scaled appearance to a building. The design and prominence of entries in the neighborhood should also be considered.

d. Garages and Carports

**Discussion:** The location, size, position and appearance of a garage can have a great effect on the appearance of a home and should be designed with care. While in most cases it is preferable to emphasize the front entrance of a home, rather than the garage, a prominent garage may be unavoidable, particularly on steeply sloping lots. In some neighborhoods, there may be an established pattern in the size, position or appearance of garages. Examples of patterns that meet the design standards are garages with single rather than double garage doors, or garages facing away from or set back from the street. If there is no established pattern, greater flexibility in design and appearance of garages should be considered.

3. Roof Design

Roof shape and type can be the most obvious elements in defining the appearance of a house and a neighborhood. When designing a new home or an addition, it is important to consider the massing of roof forms and neighborhood roof patterns and compatibility.

a. Massing and Design of Roof Forms

**Discussion:** The mass of a roof and how it is articulated into different shapes contributes to the character of a house.

Most houses with sloped roofs, and many with flat roofs, have a primary roof form and smaller secondary and minor forms that contribute to the overall style of the house.

Evaluate the massing of the roof form and determine how it will benefit the appearance of the house and be compatible with the neighborhood.

4. Exterior Materials and Colors

**Discussion:** Exterior materials and colors should complement the style of the house and that of the neighborhood, and blend with surrounding natural features when viewed from a distance. These standards are not intended to interfere with individual initiative, but rather to encourage compatibility within neighborhoods and with the natural setting. When selecting materials and colors, consider the type and character of materials and colors, number of different materials and colors, the quality of materials, and how ornamentation is applied. While no building material or color is prohibited as a matter of policy, as with other design elements, the neighborhood context provides direction for the choice of materials and colors. Use of complementary materials and colors will help a house appear compatible with its neighbors and blend with its

natural setting including surrounding vegetation and landforms.

Darker rather than lighter exterior colors may be used to reduce the apparent mass of a home.

E. Landscaping, paved areas, and fences.

While the appearance of new residential structures is of primary importance, ancillary development on a residential site can also have a significant visual impact, and should be designed carefully to complement a new or remodeled home and to prevent adverse impacts to neighboring properties. The following section provides guidance and standards for landscaping, paved areas, fencing, and lighting.

1. Landscaping

**Discussion:** Landscaping should complement and enhance the design of the home and overall site, while harmonizing with the overall landscape character of the neighborhood. New landscaping should also harmonize with existing trees and vegetation remaining on site. Landscaping should not be used in place of other more permanent architectural solutions, but should be used to accent or enhance architectural features. When developing a landscape plan, consideration should be given to water availability and the function of the landscaping - to provide shade or screening, or to protect privacy - and location and species should be selected accordingly.

2. Paved Hardscape Areas

**Discussion:** Environmentally sensitive planning and design of hardscape areas (e.g., paving, pavers, impervious/pervious concrete) on site will produce a more natural appearance and prevent stormwater pollution by reducing the volume of surface runoff, increasing infiltration, and preventing pollutants from entering the creeks and ocean. Please refer to the County's Drainage Manual for further information on this topic.

3. Fencing

**Discussion:** Site fencing should complement and enhance the design of the home, while harmonizing with the overall character of the neighborhood. Fencing should be considered and designed as an integrated part of the project, not left as an afterthought when the project is completed. Fences and walls shall comply with the height limits specified in Chapter 8.332 of the Zoning Regulations.

4. Lighting

**Discussion:** Lighting standards are necessary in order to protect the night sky from unnecessary light pollution and to minimize impact to surrounding homes and the natural environment. It can affect adjacent neighbors, or depending on topography, more distant views from scenic corridors. An appropriate lighting plan will complement the home's design and provide adequate light and security for the subject site. At the same time, the plan should prevent direct light and glare from extending in any direction,

including upward, beyond the boundaries of the site. In general, low-level lighting directed toward the ground is preferred.

F. Utilities and ancillary structures.

Utilities and ancillary structures are a necessary, but often unsightly, component of residential construction. Consideration should be given to minimizing the visual impact of such facilities. Property owners and project designers are encouraged to coordinate building, utility and ancillary structure placement at the start of a project, so that all zoning, environmental health and design standards can be met.

**SECTION 8.256.170. GENERAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS.**

In addition to the requirements listed in Section 8.256.180, project proponents are encouraged to consider the following recommendations:

- A. Consider neighbor view blockage from primary windows, as defined in Section 8.256.255.
- B. Consider neighbor privacy (as experienced from their primary windows and main outdoor areas), as defined in Section 8.256.255, when constructing new windows and outdoor areas (patios, decks, and balconies).
- C. Consider the architectural style of the main entry as a method of "way-finding", but other methods of way-finding are acceptable (e.g., pathways, porches, lighting, landscaping).
- D. When feasible, face garages away from or set back from the street. (See Figure 20 in Section 8.256.142.)

- E. Design buildings to allow for passive heating and cooling, which conserves operational mechanical system and energy needs by using a building's design and natural elements like sun, wind, and insulation to regulate its temperature. Key strategies include orienting the house to capture winter sun and block summer sun, using high-performance insulation, ensuring an airtight envelope, and employing features like strategic window and room placement based on purpose of room and time of year, thermal mass, and natural ventilation.
- F. Use of proportionate towers or singular vertical protruding features. (See Figure 19 in Section 8.256.142.)
- G. When a prominent garage is unavoidable, use decorative garage door(s) with careful selection of door style, window design, material, color, type (single or double door) to be consistent with architectural style of the house. When feasible, conform to the existing pattern in the size, position, or appearance of the garages in the neighborhood, provided that the pattern conforms with the Design Standards. (See Figure 21 in Section 8.256.142.)
- H. Landscaping along retaining walls is encouraged using planted areas along the bottom and top of the walls to reduce their apparent height and blend with their natural surroundings.
- I. Any new landscaping shall give remaining trees adequate space and light. In landscaping, consider potential view blockage and daylight impacts to neighboring properties.

- J. Use bird-friendly treatment on windows, glass railings, and other transparent exterior surfaces (“surfaces”) to minimize bird strikes.
- Bird-friendly treatment is defined as one of the following:
- (1) One of the following treatments applied to surfaces:
    - a) opaque 1/4” dots or 1/8” lines with 2×2” spacing;
    - b) low-reflectance opaque materials; or
    - c) non-glass double-skin facades;
  - (2) Permanent patterns or coatings built into surface, such as Acid-Etched or Fritted Glass or UV-Reflective Coated Glass (appears opaque to birds (who see UV light) but transparent to humans); or
  - (3) Screens or solar shading (e.g. external blinds, shutters, or rollers that can be moved based on the sun's position).

### **SECTION 8.256.180. DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS.**

The following design review standards apply to development, including Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), in the DR Zoning District, in the areas of Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV), Midcoast, and other DR areas in the Coastal Zone, and shall be applied to projects in the manner specified below:

1. For figures, see Section 8.256.142.
2. When the term “when feasible” is used, it shall mean that if a project can be designed to comply with that standard, without

conflicting with other applicable design and zoning requirements, the project shall comply with the standard. If a project cannot be designed to comply with the standard and other applicable regulations, it shall be designed to substantially comply.

3. ADUs: This section applies to new ADU construction (detached and attached ADUs) in all design review districts and supplements requirements in Chapter 8.392 . When there is a conflict between the requirements of Chapter 8.392 and this Chapter, the requirements of this Chapter shall apply. This Section does not apply to existing buildings that will be converted to an ADU where existing walls will remain , to any ADUs outside of a design review district, or to State Exempt ADUs pursuant to Government Code Section 66323.
4. All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone): Standards as marked with an “X” in table below apply to: 1) non-residential zoning districts or non-residential development located in the Midcoast Project Area and 2) areas in the Coastal Zone outside of the Midcoast Project Area.
5. Design review standards are listed on the left in the table below, followed by each DR district for application of each standard in columns to the right. Standards apply to all areas of the DR district marked with an “X” in table, unless a smaller area is indicated by a notation in parenthesis.

6. Design review exterior light standards do not apply to sites during active, permitted construction and other short-term lighting (e.g., holiday lighting, holiday tree and pumpkin lots, decorative string lighting); low-intensity landscape lighting which is directed downward and no greater than three hundred (300) lumens per fixture or low-intensity landscape lighting which is dynamic lighting and no more than one hundred (100) lumens per fixture; lighting required by building or fire codes (e.g., internally illuminated signage); emergency notification lighting (e.g., fire alarm notification appliances); lighting used for public infrastructure (e.g., street lighting); and lighting that illuminates a United States or California flag and the flagpole to which the flag is affixed, provided these luminaires shall be shielded as necessary so that the light source is not visible from the property line.
7. Design review standards do not apply to minor alterations of projects and project elements specifically approved under County permit, for which design details were approved and the project built to substantially comply with the permit, as determined by the Director of Planning and Building.
8. Applicability of County Regulations: In addition to the requirements listed in the table below, project proponents shall design projects to comply with other regulations, not limited to the applicable zoning (including but not limited to daylight plane requirements), building,

and fire codes, preservation of protected trees in accordance with Chapter 8.400 of the County Ordinance Code, protection of sensitive habitat and minimization of hazard per the County's General Plan and Local Coastal Program, and applicable fire codes in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zones.

<b>DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS &amp; APPLICATION TABLE</b>					
<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
<b>A</b>	<b><u>Building Siting</u></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). <i>(For low eave design, see Figures 11-15).</i>	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	X (Coastal zone only)		X u	X

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
	or located-in areas of the property that are not visible, as viewed from scenic areas below.				
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 developable building site on the parcel. If placed above a ridgeline, building height shall be limited to 15 feet above the ridgeline. Please refer to LCP Policy 8.7 for development on skyline and ridgelines.	X (Coastal zone only)		X	X
4	Streams, creeks, and other natural drainage systems shall not be altered (e.g., re-directed, channeled) including removal of native, non-invasive vegetation on creek banks. Culverts and bridges over streams may be allowed if necessary to provide access and found not to significantly impact sensitive habitat. (See Figure 5)	X	X	X	X
<b>B</b>	<b><u>Compatibility with Surrounding Buildings</u></b>				
1	The design of new buildings shall incorporate building and/or roof forms, colors, and/or materials of neighborhood	X	X	X	X (Rural area only)

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
	buildings and the surrounding natural environment. (See Figure 24)				
2	An addition to an existing structure shall use building and/or roof forms, and color and/or materials, to be compatible with the existing structure.	X	X	X	X
<b>C</b>	<b><u>Building Shapes and Bulk</u></b>				
1	For lots with a 15% slope or steeper in the area of proposed development, for those portion(s) of the primary building above the existing grade, design buildings with shapes that step up or down hillsides in the same direction as the natural grade. (See Figures 4 and 9).		X	X	X
2	Prohibit buildings with an extension built out over a slope supported on stilts higher than 10 feet.		X	X	
<b>D</b>	<b><u>Building Articulation</u></b>				
1	Wall and Facade Articulation: Require Wall and/or Facade Articulation for walls over 20 feet in length (with the exception of garage walls and walls facing only the interior of the parcel). One articulation detail is required for every 20 feet of the wall length for each story. This standard only applies to new construction; existing walls to remain are exempt. (See Figures 17 and 18)	X	X	X	

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
1a	Wall Articulation: Step or off-set extending to grade, with a minimum depth of 5 inches. (See Figures 17 and 18)	X	X	X	
1b	Façade Articulation: Architectural detail (decks, bays, windows, balconies, trellis feature), ornamentation, or change in building materials or colors.	X	X	X	
2	Prohibit designs where upper-story walls overhang or cantilever out over lower-story walls by more than 5 feet. Larger wall overhangs and/or cantilevers may be utilized in a modern architectural design to provide a unified design.	X (Coastal Zone Only)		X	
3	In new buildings, incorporate traditional design feature(s) found in the San Gregorio House and other houses in the community (e.g., clean and simple lines, steep roof slopes, placement of windows and doors at regular intervals, doors and windows of equal proportions, and wood construction). Require remodeling of existing buildings to retain and respect these traditional architectural features, if any.				X (San Gregorio Only; LCP 8.13)
4	In new buildings, incorporate architectural design features found in the historic buildings of the community (see inventory listing) (e.g., clean and simple lines, precise detailing, steep roof slopes, symmetrical relationship of windows and				X (Pescadero Only; LCP 8.13)

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
	doors, wood construction, white paint). Require remodeling of existing buildings to retain these traditional architectural features, if any.				
<b>E</b>	<b><u>Windows, Doors, and Decks</u></b>				
1	On building sides that do not conform to zoning district setbacks, windows facing residential development shall have a sill height of 6'6" or higher, with the exception of one, minimum size, egress window with opaque glass. This standard only applies to new construction; existing walls to remain are exempt.	X	X (Residential Use Only)	X	
2	<p><u>Bird-friendly treatment, as defined in Section 8.256.170 (J) or other equivalent alternative design measure, subject to approval by the Director of Planning and Building, is required on 90% of windows and other transparent exterior surfaces for:</u></p> <p><u>(1) All new planned developments (e.g., residential subdivisions);</u></p> <p><u>(2) Portions of new single-family and multifamily homes that exceed 30 feet above grade;</u></p> <p><u>(3) New commercial, institutional, and industrial construction projects;</u></p>		<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
	<p><u>(4) Additions and existing development that replace 50% or more of the existing exterior glass shall be subject to requirements pertaining to new construction for the relevant use type as listed above.</u></p> <p><u>In addition, bird-friendly treatment is required on the entirety of the following new or replaced features, regardless of building height: glass railings, areas with transparent corners, fly-through features, and all surfaces above a green roof.</u></p> <p><u>Exemptions: 100% affordable multifamily housing, first-floor storefronts, and all operable sash windows.</u></p>				
3	No rooftop decks are allowed in the sections of buildings that do not conform to zoning district setbacks and directly adjoin residential development located on the other side of the non-conforming yard.	X	X	X	
F	<b><u>Roofs</u></b>				
1	White roofing is prohibited (however, non-white light colors such as pale gray and beige are allowed). Metal roofs are allowed but metallic treatments (silver, copper, untreated galvanized steel) are prohibited.	X	X	X	X

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
2	Design buildings using primarily pitched roofs where more than 50% of the whole roof area is pitched, unless the existing main house to remain has a flat roof.	X (ELH/PP/DEV Only)	X		
G	<b><u>Exterior Lighting</u></b>				
1	All exterior, landscape, and site lighting shall be designed and located so that light is the minimum necessary to support the activity designated for that area, where light bulb is shielded, and light is downward-directed, away from neighbors, and confined to the site. Soffit lighting shall be limited to covered entry areas and outdoor covered patios (limited to a maximum of 1 soffit light for every 5 linear feet of these areas). Flood lights are not allowed. (See Figure 28)	X	X	X	X
2	For areas visible from and within 50 feet from scenic corridors, limit the number of exterior light fixtures to the minimum required by Building Code.	X		X	X
3	All exterior lighting shall use warm, yellow light tones with a color rating of 2,200k or lower. <u>This standard applies to all development, with the following exception: for single-family residential use/development, this standard only applies to new construction and Major Repair, Remodel or Upgrades, as</u>	X (Coastal Zone only)		X	X

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
	<u>defined in Section 8.388.020.9, of existing single-family residences.</u>				
4	Lighting around the perimeter of a site is prohibited, except where it is controlled by motion sensor which extinguishes the light no later than ten (10) minutes after activation.	X	X	X	X
<b>H</b>	<b><u>Grading and Hardscape</u></b>				
1	When an existing on-site driveway can be used to access the site of an ADU, an ADU shall utilize the existing driveway (making alterations as needed) for vehicular access.	X			
2	Prohibit raised building pads of more than 8 inches above the low side of the existing grade, unless required for technical or engineering reasons identified by a registered civil engineer, licensed architect or geotechnical consultant.	X (ADUs over 500 sf)	X	X	X
3	For single-family residential lots where the front half of the lot slopes upward an average of 15% or more from the street, do not place more than 50% of the height of the front of the garage below existing grade, unless necessary to meet maximum slope and driveway elevation requirements of the Department of Public Works or applicable fire district, in order to minimize project grading for garage	X	X	X	

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
	and driveways and alteration to the natural topography.				
4	On single-family residential sites with an average slope of 20% or more, no more than 50% of the exterior areas (excluding buildings) may be excavated to provide for a flat terrain for accessory areas, including but not limited to patios, pools, and walkways (excludes driveways).	X	X	X	
5	For single-family residential lots of conforming width, limit the amount of hardscape areas (excludes xeriscaping) of exterior areas (excluding buildings) of the property to a maximum of 50%, unless hardscape areas will be screened by landscaping to reduce visual impact from residential areas and from roadways, with no more than 50% of the front yard for non-driveway, non-walkway hardscape areas (e.g. uncovered patios, non-required uncovered parking areas, outdoor storage areas).	X	X	X	X
<b>I</b>	<b><u>Utilities and Ancillary Structures</u></b>				
1	Utilities: Install all new service lines underground for the segment extending from the nearest existing distribution point/pole to the new residence or new detached ADU. Applies to single-family residential major remodel/addition where electrical panel will be replaced.	X (Detached ADUs only)	X	X	X (Scenic Corridor Only)

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
2	When located in areas that are visible from a street or neighboring property, new wells, storage tanks, exterior trash and storage areas, irrigation backflow prevention devices, transformers, air conditioning units, heat pumps, generators, and other ancillary structures shall be screened from view.	X	X	X	
<b>J</b>	<b><u>Garages and Carports</u></b>				
1	A new garage/carport to serve an ADU of 800 s.f. or less, must not exceed 250 s.f.	X			
<b>K</b>	<b><u>Exterior Colors and Materials</u></b>				
1	For the main body color of a building, use colors such as warm grays, beiges, natural woods, and muted greens. Use of color(s) with a Light Reflectance Value (LRV) of 50% or higher as the main body color of the house is prohibited.	X (ELH, PP, DEV only)	X		X
2	Prohibit reflective materials, with the exception of glass and architectural copper trim details (roof gutters, downspouts, etc.).	X	X	X	X
3	On all building sides, use primarily natural-appearing building materials, such as wood (or wood-like), stone, board and batten, wall siding or shingles, fire-resistant roof shingles, flagstone, and rock. Stucco may only be used as a secondary material. This standard only	X (Detached ADUs only; in ELH, DEV, PP only)	X		

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
	applies to new construction; existing walls to remain are exempt.				
4	Use of T-111 plywood is prohibited.	X	X	X	X
5	Industrial Development: Employ natural or sea colors, textured building materials, and landscaping to add visual interest and soften the harsh lines of standard or stock building forms normally used in industrial districts.			X (Princeton Only; LCP 8.13)	
6	Commercial Development: Incorporate nautical elements into building design, use wood or shingle siding, employ natural or sea colors, and use pitched roofs.			X (Princeton Only; LCP 8.13)	
<b>L</b>	<b><u>Landscaping and Fences/Walls</u></b>				
1	Chainlink fences are prohibited in residential areas.	X	X	X	X
2	If CMU or cement block retaining walls are used, walls shall be textured, surfaced, painted, landscaped or otherwise treated to blend with their surroundings.	X	X	X	X
3	All landscaping shall be drought-tolerant, native, and non-invasive. No plant species listed as problematic and/or invasive by the California Native Plant Society, the California Invasive Plant Council, or by the State of California shall		X	X	X

## DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
	be planted. No plant species listed as a “noxious weed” by the State of California or the U.S. Federal Government shall be planted. Landscaping plan shall comply with Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance.				
4	All new SFDs require landscaping (new or retention of existing) in the street fronting yards		X	X	
M	<b><u>Multiple Lot Development</u></b>				
	<i>Multiple contiguous or nearby (within the same block) projects developed concurrently by one owner, applicant, developer, or builder, shall comply with the above standards applicable for residential development for the project area as well as the following additional standards:</i>				
1	Do not use the same, or same but reversed, building elevations and/or floor plans located directly across the street from each other or on adjacent parcels.		X	X	
2	Vary design style, exterior detail, rooflines, finish materials, and landscaping so that appearance is not repetitive.		X	X	
N	<b><u>Signs and Parking Lots</u></b>				

<b>DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS &amp; APPLICATION TABLE</b>					
<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
1	Paved areas such as parking lots, driveways, sidewalks, should be secondary to buildings in visual prominence as viewed from the street and landscaped to reduce visual impact.				X
2	Parking areas shall be screened from residential areas and from scenic roadways.				X
3	On-premise signs should be integrated with the design of the structure and should not extend above the roof line of the structure.				X
4	Brightly illuminated, rotating, reflective, blinking, flashing or moving signs, pennants or streamers are prohibited.				X

**8.256.190. STANDARDS FOR DESIGN IN PLANNED COLMA DISTRICT.**

The following design standards shall apply to all land designated High Density Residential, Medium High Density Residential and Neighborhood Commercial (Residential Above) within the Planned Colma (PC) Zoning District (with the exception of emergency shelters, which are exempt from discretionary design review in the High Density and Medium High Density Residential areas):

- A. Relationship to BART Station Area Specific Plan

The provisions of this section implement the BART Station Area Specific Plan. The BART Station Area Specific Plan provides further guidance in complying with the requirements of this section. The Specific Plan shall be used in conjunction with this section to design and evaluate development proposals.

B. Definitions for PC Colma

For the purposes of this subsection, the following terms are defined:

Courtyard Apartment Building. A multiple-story building containing multiple-family dwellings with shared entrances off a central courtyard.

Duplex. A building containing two-family dwellings with individual entrances.

Flat. A multiple-story building containing two-family or multiple-family dwellings with each dwelling on a separate floor.

Kiss-N-Ride Area. Designated curbside areas for passenger drop-off and pick-up.

Podium Apartment Building. A multiple-story building containing multiple-family dwellings with shared entrances over subsurface or ground floor parking.

Single-Family Home. A building containing a one-family dwelling.

Single-Loaded Apartment. Apartment unit configured to run the entire depth of a building from front to back.

Single-Story Commercial Building. A building containing commercial uses within one story.

Small Apartment Building. A multiple-story building containing multiple-family dwellings with shared entrances.

Townhouse. A multiple-story building containing one-family dwellings with each unit side-by-side and individual entrances.

C. General Residential Design Guidelines

The following guidelines shall apply to all building types.

1. Building Orientation

Require:

- a. Building entrances on streets, pedestrian ways, kiss-n-ride areas, central courtyards and parks and plazas rather than the interior of blocks or parking lots.
- b. Buildings to be placed along the frontage of the BART bus turnaround and kiss-n-ride area.

Encourage: Single-loaded apartments along the BART bus turnaround with service areas facing the BART area and active spaces facing an interior courtyard.

Prohibit: Street-facing facades consisting of a blank wall or an unbroken series of garage doors, or lined with off-street uncovered parking spaces.

2. Building Form

Require:

- a. Buildings to follow the natural topography by terracing up slopes.

- b. Variations in floor level, facades, roof patterns, architectural details, and finishes of large buildings to create the appearance of several smaller buildings.

Encourage:

- a. Unobstructed views along east-west street corridors, from the Planned Colma (PC) District to San Bruno Mountain and from surrounding areas to the area.
- b. Vertical, rather than horizontal, building forms.

### 3. Facades

Encourage:

- a. Grand entries, such as porches.
- b. Corner entries.
- c. Landmark features, such as towers, at corners of large buildings.
- d. Porches, patios, bays, solariums, and balconies.
- e. Vertical, rather than square or horizontal, windows.
- f. Casement or divided windows with individual panes of glass.
- g. High quality wooden windows and door frames.
- h. Windows and doors to be recessed one to three inches from the front facade.

Prohibit: Exterior stairs to upper floor units on street facing facades and the front half of side facades.

### 4. Roofs

Require: Mechanical equipment to be screened with parapets or the roof form.

Encourage:

- a. Roofs that are integral to the structure of the building and the design of the facade, rather than ornamental.
- b. Gable roofs.

Prohibit:

- a. Mansard roofs.
- b. Buildings covered entirely by a flat roof.

## 5. Materials

Encourage:

- a. Identical building materials on all sides of a building.
- b. Smooth-finish stucco.
- c. Horizontal wood siding.
- d. Light tints and bright accents, rather than earth tones.

Prohibit: Walls entirely of glass, reflective glass, textured stucco, and scored plywood.

## 6. Walls, Fences and Landscaping

Require: Trees to be planted every 30 feet in the setback along the frontage of the BART bus turnaround and kiss-n-ride area.

Encourage:

- a. Low walls or fences of light-colored stucco, concrete, masonry, or wood along front property lines.

- b. Low hedges along front property lines.

D. Specific Residential Design Guidelines

In addition to the General Design Guidelines, the following guidelines shall apply to specific residential building types.

1. Podium Apartments

Require:

- a. Street entries placed every 50 to 60 feet.
- b. Porches, patios, bays, solariums, and balconies overlooking streets to be placed every 25 to 30 feet.
- c. Where necessary, second floor residential bays to be placed a minimum of 3 feet above retail awnings.
- d. A minimum 20-foot by 20-foot open courtyard area on the podium above parking.
- e. A tree survey for development in the eucalyptus grove north of D Street and east of the Colma BART Station.

Encourage:

- a. One entrance to serve no more than 16 units.
- b. Courtyards to contain shared facilities and paths, surrounded by porches, patios, and entry porticos.
- c. Courtyard landscaping to provide both common and private open space.
- d. Steps to connect courtyards to the street.
- e. Ground-level open space where possible.

- f. Roof decks integrated into overall building design, with wind screens and landscaping.
- g. Preservation of existing eucalyptus trees.
- h. Openings between parking levels and podium courtyards for sunlight and ventilation.

2. Podium Apartments, Small Apartment Buildings and Courtyard Apartments

Encourage:

- a. Porches, patios, solariums, and balconies to be a minimum of 6 feet deep and 50 square feet in size.
- b. Porches and patios to be accessible directly from the street or courtyard.
- c. Second floor residential bays to be placed a minimum of 3 feet above retail awnings.

Prohibit: Open railings on balconies.

3. Small Apartment Buildings and Courtyard Apartments

Require:

- a. Street entries placed every 25 to 30 feet.
- b. A minimum 20-foot by 20-foot open space area as a combination parking and open space area.

Encourage:

- a. One entrance to serve no more than 16 units.

b. Pavement patterns and material to emphasize the combined pedestrian and auto use of parking and open space areas.

c. Hard-surface playgrounds in parking and open space areas.

4. Duplexes, Flats and Townhouses

Require: Street entries placed every 25 to 30 feet. Encourage:

a. One entrance for every one to two units.

b. Street-facing porches.

c. Porches to be a minimum of 6 feet deep and 50 square feet in size.

d. Porch support columns and roofs to appear integral to the structure of the building and the design of the facade, rather than ornamental.

E. Commercial Design Guidelines

The following guidelines shall apply to all commercial uses.

1. Building Orientation

Require: Buildings to face streets, pedestrian ways, kiss-n-ride areas, and parks and plazas rather than the interior of blocks or parking lots.

Encourage: Benches and small tables along ground floor retail frontages outside the public right-of-way.

Prohibit: Street-facing facades to consist of a blank wall.

2. Building Form

Require: Variations in floor level, facades, roof patterns, architectural details, and finishes of large buildings to create the appearance of several smaller buildings.

Encourage:

- a. Unobstructed views along east-west street corridors, from the Planned Colma (PC) District to San Bruno Mountain and from surrounding areas to the area.
- b. Vertical, rather than horizontal, building forms.

3. Facades

Require:

- a. Storefront floor to ceiling height of 12 feet.
- b. Street entries to ground floor retail shops placed every 25 to 30 feet.
- c. The design of residential entries to be clearly distinct from retail entries.
- d. Display windows of clear glass.
- e. Display windows to begin no higher than 30 inches above finished sidewalk grade.
- f. No more than 6 feet of blank, non-window, wall space in every 25 feet of storefront.

Encourage:

- a. Corner entries.

- b. Separate awnings for each shop, hanging 9 to 12 feet above the sidewalk.
- c. Columns or other vertical definition placed at least every 25 to 30 feet, alternating with entries.
- d. Storefront entries to be accented by 3- to 4-foot recesses for door swing space and associated display bays.

4. Roofs

Require: Mechanical equipment to be screened with parapets or the roof form.

Encourage:

- a. Roofs that are integral to the structure of the building and the design of the facade, rather than ornamental.
- b. Gable roofs.

Prohibit:

- a. Mansard roofs.
- b. Buildings covered entirely by a flat roof.

5. Materials

Encourage:

- a. Identical building materials on all sides of a building.
- b. Light tints and bright accents, rather than earth tones.

Prohibit: Glass curtain walls, reflective glass, textured stucco, and scored plywood.

**SECTION 8.256.255 DESIGN REVIEW GLOSSARY.**

This section shall be applied to any district which is combined with the “DR” District, except that in PC Colma, the definitions found in Section 8.256.190 shall apply in the event of any conflicting definition(s) in this section.

1. **Arch** – A curved structural member typically spanning an opening such as a door, window or arcade.
2. **Ancillary** – Subordinate.
3. **Attic** – The area formed between the ceiling joists and rafters.
4. **Balcony** – A platform or deck projecting from the wall of a building above ground level, usually enclosed by a railing.
5. **Basement** – A level of a structure that is built either entirely below grade level (full basement) or partially below grade (daylight basement).
6. **Bench Mark** – A reference point used by surveyors to establish grades and construction heights.
7. **Breezeway** – A covered walkway with open sides between two different parts of a structure.
8. **Cantilever** – Projected construction, a structural member or beam that is supported at only one end.
9. **Compatible** – Capable of existing together in harmony.
10. **Complementary** – Producing effects in concert different from those produced separately; completing.
11. **Corbel** – A projection from a wall, sometimes supporting a load and sometimes for decorative effect.

12. **Cornice** – The exterior detail at the meeting of a wall and a roof overhang; a decorative molding at the intersection of a wall and a ceiling.
13. **Crawl Space** – The area between the floor joists and the ground, usually a space that is not tall enough to stand in; also referred to as under-floor area.
14. **Dormer** – A structure protruding through the plane of a sloping roof, usually with a window and its own smaller roof.
15. **Entry** – The ingress/egress features and associated decorative elements that frame the main entrance area of a residence, including front door(s), roof(s), porch, stairs, lighting, and ornamentation/architectural elements (such as columns).
16. **Easement** – An area of land, usually deed restricted, that in most cases cannot be built upon because it provides access to a structure or to utilities such as power, water, or sewer lines.
17. **Eave** – The part of the roof that overhangs or projects from the wall of a building.
18. **Elevation** – A drawing that views a building from any of its sides; a vertical height above a reference point such as above sea level.
19. **Excavation** – The mechanical removal of earth material.
20. **Façade** – The face or front of a building.
21. **Fill** – A deposit of earth or waste material placed by artificial means.

22. **Floor Plan** – A drawing that shows the layout of a building, including the size, dimensions, and arrangement of the rooms.
23. **French Door** – Two doors, composed of small panes of glass set within rectangularly arrayed muntins, mounted within the two individual frames. Usually such doors open onto an outside terrace or porch.
24. **Grade** – The vertical location of the ground surface.
  - a. **Existing Grade** – The grade prior to or at the time of house construction/ enlargement, providing that any prior grading on the site was approved by the County or occurred before 1960 when the County began regulating grading activities.
  - b. **Finished Grade** – The final grade of the site that conforms to the approved plan.
25. **Grading** – Any excavating, filling or placement of earth materials or combination thereof.
26. **Half-Timber** – A frame construction method where spaces between wood members are filled with masonry.
27. **Hardscape** – Includes any hard surface, including permeable or impermeable surfaces, including but not limited to asphalt, concrete, pavers, and decomposed granite.
28. **Main Outdoor Areas** – Includes front and back yard areas.
29. **Mullion** – A horizontal or vertical divider between sections of a window.

30. **Neighborhood** – The area within 300 feet of a project site.
31. **Neighborhood Character** – The combination of qualities or features within a neighborhood that distinguishes it from other neighborhoods.
32. **Obscure Glass** – Glass that is not transparent.
33. **Ornamentation** – That which decorates or adorns; embellishment.
34. **Parapet** – A portion of wall that extends above the edge of the roof.
35. **Perspective** – A type of drawing that gives a 3D view of a building or space using specific viewpoints and vanishing points.
36. **Pitch** – The slope of a roof or other plane, often expressed as inches of rise per foot of run, minimum 1:12 slope.
37. **Primary Windows** - The main windows of a house where views are experienced by occupants, including dining room, living room, and bedroom windows.
38. **Private View** – A range of vision from private property.
39. **Public View** – A range of vision from a public road or other public facility (see General Plan Policy 4.10).
40. **Rafters** – The sloping roof-frame members, typically wooden, that extend from the ridge to the eaves and establish the pitch of the roof. In Craftsman and Bungalow style buildings, the ends of these, called “rafter tails,” are often left exposed rather than boxed in by a soffit.

41. **Ridgeline** – The tops of hills or hillocks normally viewed against a background of other hills (see LCP Policy 8.7).
42. **Rendering** – An artistic process applied to drawings to add realism.
43. **Rooftop Deck** – A platform incorporated into or forming the roof of a lower story, typically accessed from within an upper story.
44. **Roof Styles:**
  - a. **Flat** – A roof with a minimal roof pitch, usually about 1/8" per 12".
  - b. **Gable** – A type of roof with two sloping surfaces that intersect at the ridge of the structure.
  - c. **Gambrel** – A type of roof formed with two planes on each side. The lower pitch is steeper than the upper portion of the roof.
  - d. **Hip** – A roof shape with four sloping sides that intersect to form a pyramidal or elongated pyramidal shape.
  - e. **Mansard** – A four-sided, steep-sloped roof.
  - f. **Shed** – A roof with a single pitch.
45. **Sash** – Window framework that may be fixed or moveable.
46. **Scale** – A relative level or degree, or a proportion or relation between two things. Also, an instrument bearing ordered marks at fixed intervals used as a reference standard on measurement.

47. **Section (Cross Section)** – A type of drawing that cuts vertically through a building to show the interior and construction of a building.
48. **Sensitive Habitat** – (See LCP Policy 7.1.)
49. **Siding** – The narrow horizontal or vertical wooden boards that form the outer face of the walls in a traditional wood-frame building. Horizontal wooden siding types include shiplap and clapboard/weatherboard, while board-and-batten is the primary type of vertical siding. Shingles, whether of wood or composite material, are another siding type.
50. **Skyline** – The line where sky and land masses meet (see LCP Policy 8.7).
51. **Site Plan** – A drawing that shows the layout of a site including the topography, vegetation, surface water, etc., on a site.
52. **Split-Level** – A house that has two levels, one about a half a level above or below the other.
53. **Story** – A space in a building between the surface of any floor including a basement floor and the surface of the floor or roof next above but not including any attic or under-floor area. Typically, a story is a major section of a house that sits directly above or below other floors, while a “floor level” may be at a greater or lower height than other floors, but does not sit directly above or below them.

54. **Stucco** – A material, usually composed of cement, sand, and lime, applied to exterior walls to form a hard, uniform covering that may be either smooth or textured.
55. **Trim** – A piece of material which finishes the edge of a surface or opening. It is usually made of a different material or color from the adjacent surface.
56. **Vaulted** – An inclined ceiling area.
57. **Veneer** – A thin outer covering or non-load bearing masonry face material.
58. **Window Types:**
- a. **Bay** – A rectangular, curved or polygonal window extending beyond the main wall of the building.
  - b. **Casement** – A window that is hinged on the side and opens in or out.
  - c. **Clerestory** – A window or group of windows which are placed above the normal window height.
  - d. **Double Hung** – A type of window in which the upper and lower halves slide past each other to provide an opening at the top or bottom of the window.
  - e. **Glider/Slider** – A window with two overlapping sashes that slide horizontally in tracks.
  - f. **Fanlight** – A window, often semicircular, over a door, with radiating muntins suggesting a fan.

- g. **Louver(ed)** – A window with horizontal slats to allow for ventilation.
- h. **Transom** – Horizontal window opening above a door or another window.

### **SECTION 3**

**Related Zoning Text Amendments.** County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) Section 8.154.010 (S-17 Combining District), Section 8.208.100 (S-94 Combining District), and Section 8.232.100 (S-105 Combining District), are amended as indicated below in underline (additions) and ~~striketrough~~ (deletions):

#### **SECTION 8.154.010. REGULATIONS FOR “S-17” COMBINING DISTRICT (MIDCOAST).**

9. Daylight Plane or ~~Façade Articulation~~. New residential development shall conform to ~~either the daylight plane or façade articulation options~~ requirements described in this section, ~~as determined by the project applicant.~~

#### **SECTION 8.208.100. REGULATIONS FOR “S-94” COMBINING DISTRICT (MIDCOAST).**

~~DAYLIGHT PLANE OR FAÇADE ARTICULATION.~~ New residential development shall conform to ~~either the daylight plane or façade articulation options~~ requirements described in this section, ~~as determined by the project applicant.~~

- 1. Daylight Plane ~~Option~~. The daylight plane shall be established on two opposite house sides, i.e., either from the front and rear setback lines, or from the side setback lines, as determined by the project applicant ~~and approved by the Design Review Committee.~~

The daylight plane shall be measured from the setback line at natural grade, upward a vertical distance of 20 feet, and then inward at an angle of 45° until the maximum building height is reached.

Cornices, canopies, eaves, roof overhangs, chimneys, fire escapes, stairways; landing places; uncovered porches, and similar architectural features may extend into the daylight plane at the front, side, or rear yard, to the extent allowed by Zoning Regulations Section 6406.

Chimneys, pipes, mechanical equipment, antennae, and similar equipment may extend into the daylight plane up to a maximum of 36 feet as required for safety or efficient operation. Dormers, gables and other architectural features located in the center 60% of the house may extend into the angled portion of the daylight plane, ~~subject to Design Review Committee approval~~, provided that: (a) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 40% of the length of that building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 24 feet. (b) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 30% of the length of that building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 28 feet.

~~2. Facade Articulation Option~~

~~Facade articulation shall be provided on all building sides, and is subject to approval by the Design Review Committee. Facade~~

~~articulation is intended to break up the appearance of shear walls through the placement of projecting or recessing architectural details, including decks, bays, windows, balconies, porches, overhangs, and cantilevered features. In order to approve proposed facade articulation, the Design Review Committee must find that:~~

~~(1) all building facades are well articulated and proportioned, and~~

~~(2) each building wall is broken up so as not to appear shear, blank, looming or massive to neighboring properties.~~

**SECTION 8.232.100. REGULATIONS FOR “S-105” COMBINING DISTRICT (MIDCOAST).**

~~DAYLIGHT PLANE OR FAÇADE ARTICULATION.~~ New residential development shall conform to either the daylight plane ~~or façade articulation options~~ requirements described in this section, ~~as determined by the project applicant.~~

4. ~~Daylight Plane Option~~

The daylight plane shall be established on two opposite house sides, i.e., either from the front and rear setback lines, or from the side setback lines, as determined by the project applicant ~~and approved by the Design Review Committee.~~

The daylight plane shall be measured from the setback line at natural grade, upward a vertical distance of 20 feet, and then inward at an angle of 45 until the maximum building height is reached.

Cornices, canopies, eaves, roof overhangs, chimneys, fire escapes, stairways; landing places; uncovered porches, and similar architectural features may extend into the daylight plane at the front, side, or rear yard, to the extent allowed by Zoning Regulations Section 6406.

Chimneys, pipes, mechanical equipment, antennae, and similar equipment may extend into the daylight plane up to a maximum of 36 feet as required for safety or efficient operation. Dormers, gables and other architectural features located in the center 60% of the house may extend into the angled portion of the daylight plane, ~~subject to Design Review Committee approval~~, provided that: (a) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 40% of the length of that building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 24 feet. (b) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 30% of the length of that building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 28 feet.

~~2. Facade Articulation Option~~

~~Facade articulation shall be provided on all building sides, and is subject to approval by the Design Review Committee. Facade articulation is intended to break up the appearance of shear walls through the placement of projecting or recessing architectural details, including decks, bays, windows, balconies, porches, overhangs, and cantilevered features. In order to approve proposed~~

~~facade articulation, the Design Review Committee must find that:~~  
~~(1) all building facades are well articulated and proportioned, and~~  
~~(2) each building wall is broken up so as not to appear sheer, blank,~~  
~~looming or massive to neighboring properties.~~

**SECTION 4.**

**California Environmental Quality Act.** In accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), adoption of the ordinance is covered by the “common sense exemption” in that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment. It can be seen with certainty that the adoption of an ordinance providing objective design standard would not cause a physical change in the environment and therefore would not have a significant effect on the environment.

**SECTION 5.**

**Severability.** If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, it shall not affect the remaining portions of this ordinance.

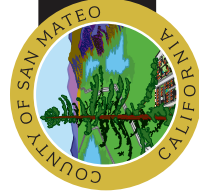
**SECTION 6.**

**Publication.** The Clerk shall publish this ordinance in accordance with applicable law.

**SECTION 7.**

**Effective Date.** This ordinance shall be effective thirty (30) days from the passage date thereof, except in the County’s Coastal Zone, where it shall be effective immediately upon certification by the California Coastal Commission.

\* \* \* \* \*



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT B

**From:** [Mark Dinh](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Camille Leung](#)  
**Subject:** Correspondence on 1/28 Planning Commission item 4 (PLN2025-00232)  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 21, 2026 4:51:47 PM

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Dear Planning Commissioners,

I am writing regarding **Item PLN2025-00232** on the January 28, 2026 Planning Commission agenda. I am a resident of Moss Beach and also serve as a community representative on the Coastside Design Review Committee (CDRC). However, I submit these comments solely in my capacity as a county resident.

First, I want to express my appreciation for the County's work in updating the Design Review Ordinance to incorporate objective standards in response to recent State legislation, including SB 9, SB 35, and ongoing ADU reform. These changes are necessary to ensure the County remains compliant with State requirements while still maintaining baseline design expectations for our communities. I would especially like to acknowledge county planning staff, in particular Senior Planner Camille Leung, for their diligence in interpreting these complex legislative mandates and for consistently engaging with the affected communities throughout the drafting process.

In particular, I was pleased to see the updates to the story pole requirements. The revised provisions establish clearer triggers for when story poles are required, while also creating reasonable exemptions for smaller and less impactful projects. These thresholds acknowledge the cost and effort associated with constructing story poles while still ensuring that larger or more significant projects offer the visual clarity neighbors and review bodies need.

In my experience serving on the CDRC, lack of story poles has frequently contributed to frustration, mistrust, or misunderstandings between applicants and neighbors. Many community members felt that digital renderings lacked accuracy or minimized the perceived scale of proposed structures. By strengthening story pole requirements in a clear and objective manner, I am hopeful that the updated ordinance will lead to better early-stage communication, fewer conflicts, and more informed and productive dialog during the review process.

I also appreciate the County's incorporation of feedback from a recent Midcoast Community Council regarding exterior lighting standards. The intent to reduce glare, protect dark skies, and preserve neighborhood character is well-reflected in the updated standards. However, I have one suggested edits to the proposed requirement that all exterior lighting use lamps rated 2200K or lower. While I fully support the dark-sky objectives, a maximum of 3000K would still provide warm, low-impact lighting and aligns more closely with the specifications already being used for "dark-sky compliant" fixtures in many recently approved projects. Adjusting the standard to 3000K or below would maintain the ordinance's intent while offering homeowners a more practical range of compliant fixtures.

Overall, I believe the draft ordinance represents a significant and thoughtful step toward balancing State

mandates, local community character, and the need for clear, enforceable standards. I thank staff and the Commission for their continued work on this effort, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,  
Mark Dinh  
Moss Beach Resident

## Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar  
PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 | midcoastcommunitycouncil.org*

**Gus Mattammal** | **Gregg Dieguez** | **Scott Bollinger** | **Kimberly Williams** | **Dan Haggerty**  
Chair Vice-Chair Treasurer Secretary  
**Ann Rothman**  
**Claire Toutant**

Date: **October 9, 2024**

To: Supervisor Ray Mueller  
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

Re: **A Lighting Ordinance for the San Mateo County Midcoast**

Dear Supervisor Mueller,

As an advisory body to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, the Midcoast Community Council represents the unincorporated communities of Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar. In recent years the Midcoast community has been impacted by a growing number of lighting issues that significantly impact quality of life, including excessively bright LED lighting that is blue-rich, nighttime glare, sleep disruption, obscured views of the night sky, and disruption and impacts to wildlife. The MCC has received many comments and complaints from those impacted by excessive nighttime lighting. In an effort to better understand the issue, we had a leading scientist in the field, [Dr. Travis Longcore](#) of UCLA, give a [presentation to the community](#) and answer questions in 2023. We have also reviewed information and recommendations from [DarkSky International](#) and ordinances adopted by other California municipalities. Based on this information and community feedback, we would like to recommend the development of a lighting ordinance for the Midcoast unincorporated areas that follows DarkSky International's guidelines, to address this ongoing problem.

A lighting ordinance would provide substantial benefits to midcoast communities and to the County by encouraging neighborhood friendly lighting, cost savings from energy efficient DarkSky compliant lighting fixtures and lighting, and better lighting plans that use lighting resources responsibly. It would also encourage consistency and cost-savings across multi-jurisdictional projects, ensuring lighting is appropriate, reduces glare, and considers all aspects of need and impact.

Responsible lighting would benefit wildlife on the coastside where sea birds such as pelicans, western snowy plovers, and other shorebirds as well as other migrating birds, are especially impacted by overly bright lighting and sky glow from light pollution. There are well-established findings about human health impacts from bright lighting at night as well, including sleep disruption, poor sleep quality, impaired daytime functioning, obesity, weakened immune system, among others. Bright lighting at night decreases vision by reducing contrast, limiting our ability to see, and older adults are especially affected by the glare. Lastly, responsible lighting would help

preserve the rural character of the coastside and allow everyone to enjoy the night sky on clear nights and would reduce the magnified glow of light pollution on foggy nights.

In recent years there has been a proliferation of excessively bright LED blue-rich spectrum lighting, and there is a misconception that this lighting is better. Science has shown that more lighting isn't better lighting, and that bright blue-rich night lighting has significant and well-documented health and environmental impacts and consequences, and wastes resources. Warmer LED lighting that is more targeted, better addresses outdoor lighting needs and reduces glare. Lighting fixtures and lights that comply with DarkSky guidelines are energy efficient and now widely available. A lighting ordinance would also be a natural fit with the County's energy efficiency measures.

The MCC further asks the County to establish a Lighting Ordinance Working Group to provide direct input and help advance the lighting ordinance. We recommend this group include at least seven stakeholders, including a representative from two relevant County departments, at least three non-profit stakeholders, and one from the MCC.

We ask San Mateo County to work towards adopting an outdoor lighting ordinance for the Midcoast based on ordinances adopted by the California cities of [Brisbane](#) and [Malibu](#). We believe any lighting ordinance should include a timeline for compliance based on criteria similar to the one outlined in the [City of Brisbane lighting ordinance](#) which establishes a reasonable graduated timeline for compliance by commercial properties, residential properties, and for street lights and County facilities. We recommend an implementation plan for the ordinance that includes incentives, educational initiatives and community outreach. The County's [Food Service Ware Ordinance](#) process is an example of how this might work.

We recognize this is the beginning of a cooperative and collaborative process and anticipate future needs to add to, subtract from, or otherwise enhance what other cities have adopted, to best address our own situation on the Midcoast.

We present this request in the spirit of furthering the goals of establishing regulations and a process for review of outdoor lighting that 1) Protects and promotes public health, welfare, and quality of life for residents, visitors, and wildlife; and, 2) Protects the view of the night sky for everyone to enjoy. We look forward to working with the County to adopt a successful lighting ordinance.

Sincerely,

MIDCOAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
s/Gus Mattammal, Chair

cc: Marisol Durani, Policy Director for Supervisor Ray Mueller  
Steve Monowitz, San Mateo County Planning Department  
Carolyn Bloede, Director, San Mateo County Sustainability Department  
Marshall Dinowitz, Sequoia Audubon Society

**From:** [Camille Leung](#)  
**To:** [Judy Taylor](#)  
**Cc:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** RE: San Mateo County: Design Review Ordinance Update Project  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 14, 2026 10:24:00 AM

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Thanks Judy. Can you expound on this? While some design standards are 'green' and environmentally-minded, not all green goals are related to design review. Are there any green goals that are missing here that are directly related to design (where compliance can be easily measured as pass or fail? Where fail will result in denial)

Thanks

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**From:** Judy Taylor <jt@judytaylor.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 8, 2026 3:04 PM  
**To:** Camille Leung <cleung@smcgov.org>  
**Subject:** Re: San Mateo County: Design Review Ordinance Update Project

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43 references to color. One mention about recommending applicants elect to pay attention to solar orientation. Have y'all talked to anyone in your building on the decarb effort?  
Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 8, 2026, at 9:21 AM, Camille Leung <[cleung@smcgov.org](mailto:cleung@smcgov.org)> wrote:

FYI, the DRAFT Updated Design Review (DR) Ordinance is available for review and has been posted at link below:

[Design Review \(DR\) Ordinance Update Project | County of San Mateo, CA](#)

It will be reviewed at the Planning Commission meeting of January 28<sup>th</sup>. Agenda and Staff Report (which will summarize the changes made to the Ordinance) to be posted on hearing page below a week before the hearing.

<https://www.smcgov.org/planning/event/planning-commission-hearing-january-28-2026>

Please reply all when sending comments/feedback. Thank you!

---

**From:** Camille Leung

**Sent:** Monday, December 8, 2025 12:00 PM

**Subject:** San Mateo County: Design Review Ordinance Update Project

Hi Design and Development professionals of San Mateo County,

I wanted to let you know that the Design Review Ordinance Update project will go to Planning Commission on January 14, 2026 (staff report to be posted on Jan. 7):  
<https://www.smcgov.org/planning/event/planning-commission-hearing-january-14-2026>

See website below for more info:

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

The Draft ordinance (not yet posted) and updated draft standards will be released before Christmas at the website above.

Please reach out to me directly if you have questions

Thanks

Camille Leung, Senior Planner



## Buildings for the 21st Century

Buildings that are more energy efficient, comfortable, and affordable...that's the goal of DOE's Office of Building Technology, State and Community Programs (BTS). To accelerate the development and wide application of energy efficiency measures, BTS:

- Conducts R&D on technologies and concepts for energy efficiency, working closely with the building industry and with manufacturers of materials, equipment, and appliances
- Promotes energy/money saving opportunities to both builders and buyers of homes and commercial buildings
- Works with state and local regulatory groups to improve building codes, appliance standards, and guidelines for efficient energy use
- Provides support and grants to states and communities for deployment of energy-efficient technologies and practices



# PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN

*Increase energy efficiency and comfort in homes by incorporating passive solar design features*

## DESIGN WITH THE SUN IN MIND

Sunlight can provide ample heat, light, and shade and induce summertime ventilation into the well-designed home. Passive solar design can reduce heating and cooling energy bills, increase spatial vitality, and improve comfort. Inherently flexible passive solar design principles typically accrue energy benefits with low maintenance risks over the life of the building.

## DESIGN TECHNIQUES

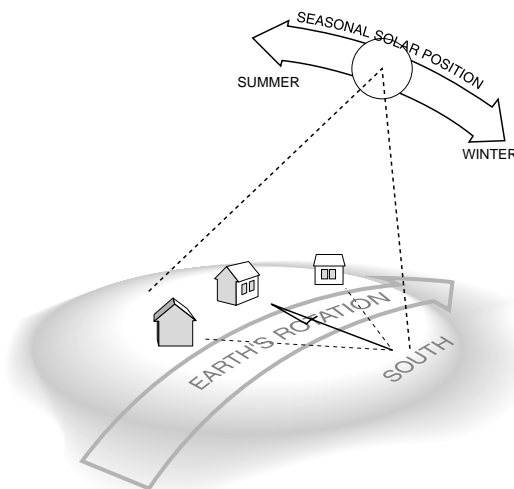
Passive solar design integrates a combination of building features to reduce or even eliminate the need for mechanical cooling and heating and daytime artificial lighting. Designers and builders pay particular attention to the sun to minimize heating and cooling needs. The design does not need to be complex, but it does involve knowledge of solar geometry, window technology, and local climate. Given the proper building site, virtually any type of architecture can integrate passive solar design.

Passive solar heating techniques generally fall into one of three categories: *direct gain*, *indirect gain*, and *isolated gain*. Direct gain is solar radiation that directly penetrates and is stored in the living space. Indirect gain collects, stores, and distributes solar radiation using some thermal storage material (e.g., Tromb  wall). Conduction, radiation, or convection then transfers the energy indoors. Isolated gain systems (e.g., sunspace) collect solar radiation in an area that can be selectively closed off or opened to the rest of the house.

Passive solar design is not new. In fact, ancient civilizations used passive solar design. What is new are building materials, methods, and

## SOLAR POSITIONING CONSIDERATIONS

The south side of the home must be oriented to within 30 degrees of due south.



software that can improve the design and integration of passive solar principles into modern residential structures.

## COST

It takes more thought to design with the sun; however, passive solar features such as additional glazing, added thermal mass, larger roof overhangs, or other shading features can pay for themselves. Since passive solar designs require substantially less mechanical heating and cooling capacity, savings can accrue from reduced unit size, installation, operation, and maintenance costs. Passive solar design techniques may therefore have a higher first cost but are often less expensive when the lower annual energy and maintenance costs are factored in over the life of the building.

## DIRECT GAIN PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN TECHNIQUES

Passive solar design strategies vary by building location and regional climate, but the basic techniques remain the same—maximize solar heat gain in winter and minimize it in summer. Specific techniques include:

- Start by using energy-efficient design strategies.
- Orient the house with the long axis running east/west.
- Select, orient, and size glass to optimize winter heat gain and minimize summer heat gain for the specific climate. Consider selecting different glazings for different sides of the house (exposures).
- Size south-facing overhangs to shade windows in summer and allow solar gain in winter.
- Add thermal mass in walls or floors for heat storage.
- Use natural ventilation to reduce or eliminate cooling needs.
- Use daylight to provide natural lighting.

These techniques are described in more detail below.

- ✓ **Cutting Losses.** A passive solar home should start out well sealed and well insulated. By reducing heat loss and gain, remaining energy loads can be effectively met with passive solar techniques. Approaches that contribute to minimizing heating and cooling loads include using advanced framing guidelines, properly installing insulation, using recommended insulation levels (International Code Council’s International Energy Conservation Code, (703) 931-4533, [www.intlcode.org](http://www.intlcode.org) or the U.S. Department of Energy’s Insulation Fact Sheet, DOE/CE-0180, (800) DOE-EREC, [www.ornl.gov/roofs+walls](http://www.ornl.gov/roofs+walls)), reducing duct losses, and tightening the building envelope.
- ✓ **Site Orientation.** The building’s southern exposure must be clear of large obstacles (e.g., tall buildings, tall trees) that block the sunlight. Although a true southern exposure is optimal to maximize solar contribution, it is neither mandatory nor always possible. Provided the building faces within 30° of due south, south-facing glazing will receive about 90 percent of the optimal winter solar heat gain.

- ✓ **Window Selection.** Heating with solar energy is easy: just let the sun shine in through the windows. The natural properties of glass let sunlight through but trap long-wave heat radiation, keeping the house warm (the greenhouse effect). The challenge often is to properly size the south-facing glass to balance heat gain and heat loss properties without overheating.


Increasing the glass area can increase building energy loss. New window technologies, including selective coatings, have lessened such concerns by increasing window insulation properties to help keep heat where it is needed.

In heating climates, reduce the window area on north-, east-, and west-facing walls, while still allowing for adequate daylight. Effective south-facing windows require a high Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC)—usually 0.60 or higher—to maximize heat gain, a low U-factor (0.35 or less) to reduce conductive heat transfer, and a high visible transmittance (VT) for good visible light transfer. SHGC refers to the portion of incident sunlight admitted through a window, and U-factor indicates the heat loss rate for the window assembly.

In cooling climates, particularly effective strategies include preferential use of north-facing windows along with generously shaded south-facing windows. Shading from landscaping, overhangs, shutters, and solar window screens helps lower heat gain on windows that receive full sun.

## WINDOW RATINGS

Many windows include a National Fenestration Rating Council sticker that lists U-factors, SHGC, and VT.

National Fenestration Rating Council INCORPORATED			
AAA Window Company			
Energy Rating Factors	Ratings		Product Description
	Residential	Nonresidential	
U-factor <small>Determined in accordance with NFRC 100</small>	0.40	0.38	Model 1000 Casement Low-e Argon Filled
Solar Heat Gain Coefficient <small>Determined in accordance with NFRC 200</small>	0.65	0.66	
Visible Transmittance <small>Determined in accordance with NFRC 200</small>	0.71	0.71	
<small>NFRC ratings are determined for a fixed set of environmental conditions and specific product sizes and may not be appropriate for directly determining seasonal energy performance. For additional information contact:</small>			

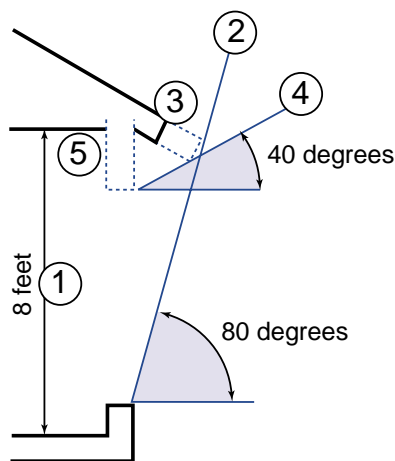
# PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN

Cost effective windows for cooling climates have a U-factor below 0.4 and a SHGC below 0.55 (a lower SHGC cuts cooling costs).

Wherever possible, climate-specific window property recommendations from the Efficient Windows Collaborative should be followed.

- ✓ **Suntempering.** In cold climates, a strategy termed “suntempering” orients most of the home’s glazing toward the south—a glazing area of up to 7 percent of the building floor area. Additional south-facing glazing may be included if more thermal mass is built in. Such a shift in window location is a great strategy for cold climates and costs nothing beyond good planning. Many passive solar homes are merely suntempered.

## SIZE SOUTH FACING OVERHANGS TO PROPERLY SHADE WINDOWS



### • OVERHANG SIZING RULES:

1. Draw the wall to be shaded to scale.
2. Draw the summer sun angle upward from the bottom of the glazing.
3. Draw the overhang until it intersects the summer sun angle line.
4. Draw the line at the winter sun angle from the bottom edge of the overhang to the wall.
5. Use a solid wall above the line where the winter sun hits. The portion of the wall below that line should be glazed.

- ✓ **Shading.** The summer sun rises higher overhead than the winter sun. Properly sized window overhangs or awnings are an effective option to optimize southerly solar heat gain and shading. They shade windows from the summer sun and, in the winter when the sun is lower in the sky, permit sunlight to pass through the window to warm the interior. Landscaping helps shade south-, east-, or west-facing windows from summer heat gain. Mature deciduous trees permit most winter sunlight (60 percent or more) to pass through while providing dappled shade throughout summer.
- ✓ **Heat Storage.** *Thermal mass*, or materials used to store heat, is an integral part of most passive solar design. Materials such as concrete, masonry, wallboard, and even water absorb heat during sunlit days and slowly release it as temperatures drop. This dampens the effects of outside air temperature changes and moderates indoor temperatures. Although even overcast skies provide solar heating, long periods of little sunshine often require a back-up heat source. Optimum mass-to-glass ratios, depending on climate, may be used to prevent overheating and minimize energy consumption (*The Sun's Joules*, <http://solstice.crest.org/renewables/SJ/passive-solar/136.html>). Avoid coverings such as carpet that inhibit thermal mass absorption and transfer.
- ✓ **Natural Cooling.** Apt use of outdoor air often can cool a home without need for mechanical cooling, especially when effective shading, insulation, window selection, and other means already reduce the cooling load. In many climates, opening windows at night to flush the house with cooler outdoor air and then closing windows and shades by day can greatly reduce the need for supplemental cooling. Cross-ventilation techniques capture cooling, flow-through breezes. Exhausting naturally rising warmer air through upper-level openings (stack effect; e.g., clerestory windows) or fans (e.g., whole-house fan) encourages lower-level openings to admit cooler, refreshing, replacement air.
- ✓ **Natural Lighting.** Sometimes called daylighting, natural lighting refers to reliance on sunlight for daytime interior lighting. Glazing characteristics include high-VT glazing on the east, west, and north facades combined with large, south-facing window areas. A daylit room requires, as a general rule, at least 5 percent of the room floor area in glazing. Low-emissivity (low-E) coatings can help minimize glare while offering appropriate improved climatic heat gain or loss characteristics. Sloped or horizontal glass (e.g., skylights) admit light but are often problematic because of unwanted seasonal overheating, radiant heat loss, and assorted other problems.

# PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN

For more information, contact:

**Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearinghouse (EREC)**  
1-800-DOE-3732  
[www.eren.doe.gov](http://www.eren.doe.gov)

Or visit the BTS Web site at  
[www.eren.doe.gov/buildings](http://www.eren.doe.gov/buildings)

Or visit the Sustainable Buildings Industry Council Web site at  
[www.sbicouncil.org](http://www.sbicouncil.org)

Or visit the Efficient Window Collaborative Web site at  
[www.efficientwindows.org](http://www.efficientwindows.org)

Written and prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy by:

**NAHB Research Center**  
800-898-2842  
[www.nahbrc.org](http://www.nahbrc.org)

**Southface Energy Institute**  
404-872-3549  
[www.southface.org](http://www.southface.org)

**U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory**  
Buildings Technology Center  
423-574-5178  
[www.ornl.gov/ORNL/BTC](http://www.ornl.gov/ORNL/BTC)

Factsheets on insulation are available from the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearinghouse (EREC)  
1-800-DOE-3732  
[www.eren.doe.gov](http://www.eren.doe.gov)

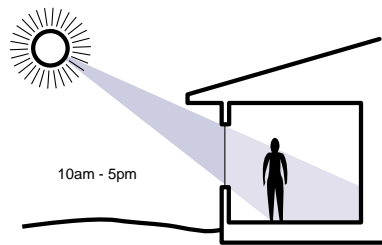
NOTICE: Neither the United States government nor any agency thereof, nor any of their employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States government or any agency thereof.

## PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN TOOLS

One of the best ways to design an energy-efficient house featuring passive solar techniques is to use a computer simulation program. Energy-10 is a PC-based design tool that helps identify the best combination of energy-efficient strategies, including

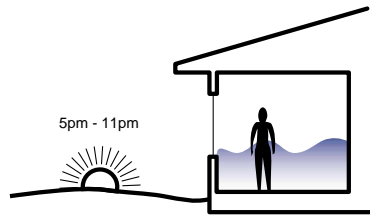
daylighting, passive solar heating, and high-efficiency mechanical systems. Another tool to optimize window area and aid window selection is RESFEN. Access these and other passive solar design tools from the DOE's Office of Building Technology, State, and Community Program's website.

## THERMAL MASS IN THE HEATING SEASON



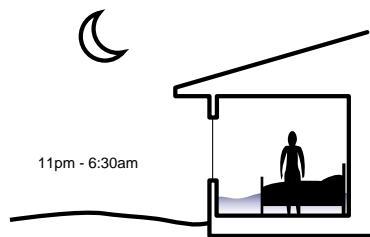
10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Sunlight enters south-facing windows and strikes the thermal mass inside the home. The sunlight is converted to heat energy, which heats both the air and thermal mass materials. On most sunny days, solar heat maintains comfort during the mid-morning to late afternoon periods.



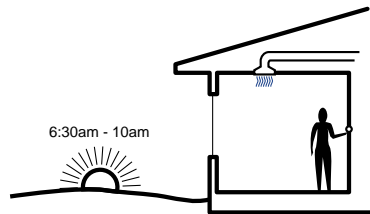
5:00 pm to 11:00 pm

As the sun sets, it stops supplying heat to the home. However, a substantial amount of heat has been stored in the thermal mass. These materials release the heat slowly into the passive solar rooms, keeping them comfortable on most winter evenings. If temperatures fall below the comfort level, supplemental heat is needed.



11:00 pm to 6:30 am

The home owner sets the thermostat back at night, so only minimal back-up heating is needed. Energy-efficient features in the home minimize heat losses to the outside.



6:30 am to 10:00 am

The cool early morning hours are the toughest for passive solar heating systems to provide comfort. The thermal mass has usually given up most of its heat, and the sun has not risen enough to begin heating the home. During this period, the home owner may have to rely on supplemental heat. Energy-efficient features in the home minimize the need for supplemental heating.



Printed with a renewable-source ink on paper containing at least 50% wastepaper, including 20% postconsumer waste.

December 2000 DOE/G0102000-0790

**From:** [Camille Leung](#)  
**To:** [Steve Terry](#)  
**Cc:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Going to MCC with light standards in the Draft Design Review Ordinance Update on 10/22.  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 3:55:18 PM

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Thanks Steve. I am copying the Planning Commission Secretary to add this to correspondence for the item tomorrow.

I propose that the 3000 k light standards would apply to residential projects. I think the lower 2200k can and should be applied to school lighting (institutional use) and commercial uses. What do you think? Street lights are outside of our regulatory power (DPW has authority).

---

**From:** Steve Terry <terrysteve@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026 3:40 PM  
**To:** Camille Leung <cleung@smcgov.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Going to MCC with light standards in the Draft Design Review Ordinance Update on 10/22.

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.**

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Hi Camille,

Increasing there color temperature limit to 3000K would be a pretty dramatic, last minute change to the spec based on one individual's comment — one week before the SMC PC review and after it's been reviewed by all the relevant communities across the county.

If, indeed, you would like to make such a change, I would request you pull this item from the PC agenda and re-circulate it to the communities, (e.g., MCC), for review.

That spec is one that we've long cultivated on the Coastside:

- Our street lights are 2200K.
- The El Granada. Elementary School lights are 2200K.
- And this is in line with what folks on the Coastside have been supporting for many years now.

2200K is certainly adequate for safe lighting; I don't think "*offering homeowners a more practical range of compliant fixtures*" is a strong enough statement to reverse out years of community work.

I'm curious whether you've investigated this claim. Is it true that it's difficult or impossible to get 2200K fixtures? I would like to see some quantitative data. I don't know myself, but I suspect it's not a show-stopping issue. And I also imagine that

more & more lower Kelvin fixtures will be available as the world goes toward warmer colors.

Please hold off on suggesting this change at this time.

Please include this comment with the information provided to the Planning Commission.

Thank you.  
Steve Terry  
El Granada

On 01/27/2026 10:10 AM PST Camille Leung <[cleung@smcgov.org](mailto:cleung@smcgov.org)> wrote:

Hi Steve,

Please see correspondence at link. To his point, 2200k is very very warm and yellow. As the upper limit (where any higher would result in a violation) it maybe too low. I plan to support increasing the limit to 3000k. Ok? Thanks

See Item 4 Correspondence:

<https://www.smcgov.org/planning/event/planning-commission-hearing-january-28-2026>



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT C

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

**DATE:** January 28, 2026

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Planning Staff

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 (non-coastal) and Chapter 28.1 (coastal) of the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations), and adopting related zoning text amendments for various zoning districts for consistency with the new ordinance. The new ordinance will regulate development within Design Review zoning districts in the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County.

County File Number: PLN2025-00232 (San Mateo County)

**PROPOSAL**

The overarching goals of the Design Review (DR) Ordinance Update Project (Project) are to:

1. Revise the current DR Zoning District design standards such that they are objective in order to 1) further streamline design review and 2) replace subjective standards, which cannot be enforced per State law for State-streamlined housing project types (such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and SB 9 and SB 35 projects), to ensure that new projects remain compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods; and
2. Establish a ministerial design review process in areas outside of the Coastal Zone, thereby eliminating the Bayside Design Review Committee (BDRC) and the Emerald Lake Hills Design Review Officer (DRO) hearing and associated DRO requirements for areas outside of the Coastal Zone.

In the Midcoast, the Coastside Design Review Committee (CDRC) would continue its discretionary design review of projects that are not subject to State streamlining. (Note that, to date, qualifying ADUs are the only housing type subject to mandatory ministerial review in the Coastal Zone)

### *County Design Review Districts*

The County's Design Review zoning districts include the Midcoast in the Coastal Zone, and Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll Manor, Devonshire, and Palomar Park outside of the Coastal Zone; Design Review Committees administer the regulations in these areas. The Design Review zoning districts also include areas where design review is conducted at a staff level, including San Gregorio, Pescadero, and the Rural Midcoast in the Coastal Zone, and Planned Colma outside of the Coastal Zone. Maps showing DR zoning districts are included as Attachment C.

### *State Laws Limiting Application of Subjective Design Review Standards*

In 2016, the State legislature enacted legislation to streamline permitting of ADUs, including limiting application of design review standards to objective standards. In 2019, the legislature declared a State housing shortage crisis and enacted additional legislation limiting application of design review standards to objective standards for other State-streamlined housing types including projects under Senate Bill 35 (which allows by-right production of new housing with at least 10% affordable units in municipalities that have not met their Regional Housing Need Allocation) and SB 9 (which allows up to four dwelling units on urban, single-family residential parcels), among others. Both SB 9 and SB 35 are effective in the unincorporated areas of the County that are outside of the Coastal Zone and have very limited applicability in the Coastal Zone.

Adoption of the ordinance will enable the County to apply design review standards to ADUs and other State-streamlined housing types that have been largely approved without design standards since the adoption of State laws described above. Compliance with the updated ordinance increase compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods while still facilitating streamlined processing and approval. State law generally requires ministerial review of these qualifying housing projects, effectively prohibiting public comment periods, potential hearings, and appeals associated with discretionary review procedures.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Planning Commission recommend that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Determine that the project is exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, under Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the "common sense exemption";
2. Adopt an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 (non-coastal) and Chapter 28.1 (coastal) of the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations), and adopting related zoning text amendments for various zoning districts for consistency with the new ordinance.

3. Adopt a resolution directing staff to submit the ordinance to the Coastal Commission.
4. Adopt a resolution amending the Planning and Building Department's Planning Services Fee Schedule to revise design review related fees.

**BACKGROUND**

Report Prepared By: Camille Leung, Senior Planner

Applicant: San Mateo County Planning and Building Department

Location: Unincorporated County areas

Existing Zoning: The following zoning districts are combined with the Design Review zoning district:

1. Outside of the Coastal Zone: Residential Hillside (RH); R-1/S-71 (Devonshire); R-1/S-91 (Palomar Park); R-1/S-101 (Palomar Park); R-1/S-102 (Devonshire); and Planned Colma (PC Colma). The project does not include proposed text amendments to these zoning districts.
2. Inside the Coastal Zone: R-1 (S-10; S-7; S-13; S-17; S-94; S-105), R-3, R-3-A, RM-CZ, W, C-1, CCR, COSC, EG, M-1, MH, P, PAD, and PUD. The project includes proposed text amendments to the S-17, S-94, and S-105 zoning districts.

Chronology:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
Summer 2025	- County's release of draft design standards for review and presentation of draft design standards to Bayside Design Review Committee (BDRC) and Coastside Design Review Committee (CDRC). The BDRC reviewed the standards at their September and October 2025 public meetings. The CDRC reviewed the standards at their August, September, and October 2025 public meetings.
October 22, 2025	- Staff presented to the Midcoast Community Council (MCC), with discussion focused on standards regulating exterior lighting.
January 28, 2026	- Planning Commission public hearing.
March 24, 2026	- Board of Supervisors public hearing (tentative date).

## DISCUSSION

### A. COMPLIANCE WITH COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

Through various policies such as those listed below, the General Plan encourages the establishment and maintenance of design review districts within Coastal and non-Coastal areas of the unincorporated County:

1. Policy 4.33 (*Rural Design Review District*): Regulate the site planning of all development in rural areas by using a consolidated set of design standards.
2. Policy 4.38 (*Urban Design Review District*): Develop design review regulations which incorporate guidelines on managing design problems found in predominantly urban areas.

### B. COMPLIANCE WITH THE LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM (LCP)

Through various policies, as listed below followed by a discussion of the Project's compliance, the LCP encourages the establishment and maintenance of design review districts within Coastal areas of the unincorporated County. Full discussion included in Attachment B.

1. LCP Policy 8.13 (*Special Design Guidelines for Coastal Communities*)
  - a. Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada-Miramar
    - (1) *Design structures that fit the topography of the site and do not require extensive cutting, grading, or filling for construction.* The Project includes objective standards to minimize alteration of natural topography and grading (see Section H of the standards table of Attachment D3).
    - (2) *Employ the use of natural materials and colors that blend with the vegetative cover of the site.* The Project includes objective standards to require the use of materials that are compatible with the surrounding natural and built environment (see Section K of the standards table of Attachment D3).
    - (3) *Use pitched roofs that are surfaced with non-reflective materials except for the employment of solar energy devices. The limited use of flat roofs may be allowed if necessary to reduce view impacts or to accommodate varying architectural styles that are compatible with the character of the surrounding area.* The Project includes objective standards to prohibit the use of reflective finishes for roofing and further allows for flat roofs in

the Midcoast to accommodate contemporary architectural styles (see Section F of the standards table of Attachment D3).

- (4) *Design structures that are in scale with the character of their setting and blend rather than dominate or distract from the overall view of the urbanscape.* The Project includes objective standards to regulate the scale of development such that it is compatible with surrounding development (see Sections B and C of the standards table of Attachment D3).
- (5) *To the extent feasible, design development to minimize the blocking of views to or along the ocean shoreline from Highway 1 and other public viewpoints between Highway 1 and the sea. Public viewpoints include coastal roads, roadside rests and vista points, recreation areas, trails, coastal accessways, and beaches. This provision shall not apply in areas west of Denniston Creek zoned either Coastside Commercial Recreation or Waterfront.* The Project includes standards for protecting ocean views from public viewing points, specifically Standard A.3 of Attachment D3.

2. Policy 8.32 (Regulation of Scenic Corridors in Urban Areas)

- a. *Apply the regulations of the Design Review (DR) Zoning Ordinance.*
- b. *Apply the design criteria of the Community Design Manual.*
- c. *Apply specific design guidelines for Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton-by-the-Sea, Miramar, San Gregorio, and Pescadero as set forth in Urban Design Policies of the LCP.*

The Project maintains and improves the objectivity of specific design guidelines for Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton-by-the-Sea, Miramar, San Gregorio, and Pescadero as set forth in Urban Design Policies of the LCP.

3. Policy 9.18.b (Regulation of Development on 30% or Steeper Slopes)

*Employ the siting and grading criteria of the Design Review Zoning Ordinance and the Community Design Manual for Development on Slopes 30% or Greater.* The Project includes objective standards to minimize alteration of natural topography and grading, including on slopes 30% or greater (see Section H of the standards table of Attachment D3).

C. SUMMARY OF DESIGN REVIEW ORDINANCE UPDATES

1. *The Project proposes revisions to create a ministerial design review process outside of the Coastal Zone, establish an exception process, and establish fees for these processes.*

Currently, in Design Review districts outside of the Coastal Zone, a discretionary Design Review permit is required for new houses, additions over 500 sq. ft., and major design changes to existing homes. Obtaining a Design Review permit for such projects requires public notice to property owners within 300 feet of a project site, a public hearing, an appeal process, and adds substantial cost (approximately \$5,200-\$7,700) and time (approximately four to eight months) to the permitting process.

In these areas, the ordinance would streamline design review permits by establishing a ministerial staff-level design review process, thereby eliminating the Bayside Design Review Committee and the Emerald Lake Hills Design Review Officer (DRO) hearing and associated DRO role for these non-coastal areas. The proposed ministerial design review process would not require a separate application, permit, or public notice, and would not be appealable (unless it is combined with a discretionary permit). Review for compliance would be completed by staff, using a checklist, either before or during the building permit process for projects that do not require discretionary Planning permits, or during Planning’s review of an associated discretionary permit (such as grading or use permits).

<i>Table 1: Review Process by Project Type in Non-Coastal Zone</i>		
	<i>Current Ordinance</i>	<i>Updated Ordinance</i>
<i>State-streamlined housing (e.g., SB 9, SB 35, ADUs)</i>	<i>Ministerial review with application of limited existing objective standards for SB 9 projects; no objective standards for other housing types</i>	<i>Ministerial review with objective standards</i>
<i>Non-State-streamlined housing (SFDs, Additions)</i>	<i>Discretionary review with objective and subjective standards</i>	<i>Ministerial review with objective standards</i>

<i>Table 2: Review Process by Project Type in Coastal Zone</i>		
	<i>Current Ordinance</i>	<i>Updated Ordinance</i>
<i>State-streamlined housing (e.g., ADUs)</i>	<i>Ministerial review with no objective standards applied</i>	<i>Ministerial review with objective standards</i>
<i>Non-State-streamlined housing (SFDs, Additions)</i>	<i>Discretionary review with objective and subjective standards</i>	<i>Discretionary review with objective standards</i>

The Project also proposes new processes to allow for minor exceptions (subject to approval by the Director, when a project is in substantial conformance with the design review standards) and major exceptions to the standards through a use permit process.

In the Midcoast, discretionary design review of non-State-streamlined housing by the CDRC will continue, albeit with clearer, objective standards, as the ordinance would provide a process for approval of minor exceptions by the CDRC and approval of major exceptions by the Planning Commission.

*Table 3: Review/Permit types and Decision-maker*

<i>Review/Permit</i>	<i>Decision-maker</i>
<i>Over-the-Counter DR Exemption (DRX)</i>	<i>Staff/Design Review Administrator (DRA)</i>
<i>Formal DRX</i>	<i>Staff/DRA</i>
<i>Ministerial Review (residential and commercial)</i>	<i>Staff/DRA</i>
<i>Discretionary DR (hearing level; Coastal Zone only)</i>	<i>CDRC</i>
<i>Discretionary staff-level DR</i>	<i>Staff/DRA</i>
<i>Minor Exception</i>	<i>CDRC; DRA for ministerial permits</i>
<i>Major Exception</i>	<i>Planning Commission</i>

New fees, associated with new processes created by the ordinance, would be established by Board resolution. These fees are compatible with existing permit fees with similar processes and work products (See Attachment H for Draft Fee Study and Draft Resolution for Board of Supervisors review).

*Ministerial Design Review Fee for New Single Family Residential Construction: \$861*

*Ministerial Design Review Fee for New Commercial/Multiple Family Residential Construction: \$861*

*Ministerial Design Review Fee for Single Family Residential Alteration, Addition, and Detached/Attached ADUs: \$646*

*Minor Design Review Exception: \$861 (added to review fee)*

*Major Design Review Exception: \$4,079 (added to review fee)*

2. *The Project proposes revisions to Design Review Standards to clarify and make standards objective, consolidate related standards from other regulations, and delete unnecessary or duplicative requirements.*

State law defines objective standards as those that “involve no personal or subjective judgement by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant and public official prior to submittal.” Government Code Section 65913.4(a)(5). Design standards are “objective” if they are measurable, verifiable, and knowable to all parties prior to project submittal. To this end, the Project proposes to replace subjective language with objective criteria, with examples as described in Attachment F.

Existing standards that could not be made objective would be deleted. For example, standards pertaining to blocking views from private properties and maintaining privacy of private properties used a standard that allowed a “reasonable amount” of impact, which is not possible to quantify. A standard that would prohibit blocking any private views or infringing on any privacy would be objective, but would, in many instances, likely prevent property owners from developing their property in a manner protected by the constitution. Subjective terms like a “reasonable” amount of impact and “reasonable” development are in contrast to characteristics such as project size and proximity to neighboring property, which can be objectively measured. Accordingly, the ordinance proposes to delete standards that cannot be made objective, such as those pertaining to view and privacy protection, but adds these as recommendations for applicants to consider in designing their project.

The Project also consolidates design standards from the Community Design Manual with the standards of the ordinance. The ordinance also makes changes that reflect staff experience; some standards have not been consistently enforced or have been largely ignored, due to community and staff priorities. In the Midcoast, this includes standards such as those limiting flat roofs and location of high activity areas next to neighboring low activity areas, among others.

The Project also deletes existing design standards that are now addressed by other regulations, such as those pertaining to tree protection (regulated by the Protected Tree Ordinance), water efficient landscaping (regulated by the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance), and fire-rated exterior materials (regulated by the Fire Code).

The Project aims to clarify the language of existing objective standards and make new or revised standards as easy to understand, apply, and enforce, as possible. To this end, the Project separates the standards for the Midcoast from the more general “guiding principles,” placing the standards in a table. The Project also applies the explanation of design principles and a glossary currently pertaining to the Midcoast to all DR areas and updates

the regulations to better reflect current processes for design review exemptions, including over-the-counter and formal exemption processes.

3. *The Project makes other updates to address CDRC feedback and public concerns.*
  - a. *Require story poles for larger projects while simultaneously increasing the size threshold for projects exempt from CDRC review from 150 sq. ft. to 500 sq. ft.,*

The Project incorporates existing County story pole policy into the ordinance, making the policy enforceable rather than advisory. For smaller projects (e.g., residences and additions smaller than 800 sq. ft.) the ordinance would require projects to demonstrate scale through digital renderings, and require story poles for larger projects. As the story pole requirement would add process and costs for projects, the CDRC suggested a simultaneous increase of the size threshold for projects exempt from CDRC review from 150 sq. ft. to 500 sq. ft. This would allow smaller projects (e.g., additions, garages) which under current regulations would be reviewed by the CDRC, to go through a staff-level ministerial formal exemption, thereby streamlining review for such projects.

- b. *Strengthen exterior lighting standards.*

In response to public comments collected over time and at the Midcoast Community Council on October 22, 2025, the Project also adds to current exterior light standards including requiring all exterior lighting to use warm, yellow light tones with a color rating of 2200 Kelvin (k) or lower, and to prohibit lighting around the perimeter of a site except where it is controlled by motion sensor which extinguishes the light no later than 10 minutes after activation. A member of the public suggested a new lighting ordinance, such as the City of Brisbane's light ordinance. Staff responded that the concerns could be addressed more readily by strengthening current lighting standards of the DR regulations.

- c. *Imposes design review standards on small projects that do not require other County permits (e.g., exterior painting, lighting).*

Currently, Section 8.256.030 (Requirement for Design Review and Approval) applies design review requirements "to all new exterior construction which requires a building permit, grading or land clearing that requires a grading permit, or tree cutting that requires a tree cutting permit, unless the activity is determined to be exempt in accordance with Section 8.256.040." In order to apply the standards to smaller projects, such as paint color and exterior lighting changes,

where no other County permit is required but which are of concern to the community, the revised ordinance applies design review to all exterior *alterations*, regardless of whether a County permit is required. This change gives the County legal authority to enforce DR standards for such alterations made to a property which do not comply. Such enforcement actions would be at the County's discretion and based on the level and priority of the violation.

d. *Establish consistent height measurement standards.*

The Project also proposes to establish a consistent height measurement method for residential and commercial projects in the Midcoast, which currently varies and allows for more height in commercial districts due to an average grade-to-average roofline measurement method. This change is proposed in response to comments from the public and MCC.

D. RELATED ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS

In addition to replacing the Design Review chapter of the Zoning Regulations, the Project includes text amendments to the Zoning Regulations, specifically language in the S-17, S-94, and S-105 zoning districts allowing for compliance with daylight plane or façade articulation. All proposed changes to the County Zoning Regulations are described in Attachment D1.

E. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), adoption of the ordinance is covered by the "common sense exemption" in that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment. Here, it can be seen with certainty that adoption of an ordinance providing objective design standards would not cause a physical change in the environment and therefore would not have a significant effect on the environment. State law mandates ministerial review for certain project types, and this ordinance would improve the County's ability to address design considerations as part of that ministerial process. Discretionary projects would continue to be subject to CEQA review at the time of proposal. Objective design standards do not change allowable uses or permitted residential densities.

F. AGENCIES CONSULTED

Coastside Design Review Committee  
Bayside Design Review Committee  
Midcoast Community Council  
County Attorney's Office

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Recommendation
- B. Analysis of Compliance with the Local Coastal Program
- C. Maps of Design Review Zoning Districts
  - 1. Outside of the Coastal Zone
  - 2. Inside Coastal Zone
- D. Draft Ordinance
  - 1. Draft Ordinance Repealing and Replacing Chapter 8.256 (non-coastal) and Chapter 28.1 (coastal) of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) regulating DR Districts of the County
  - 2. Draft Design Review (DR) Zoning District Text Amendment (except Design Review Standards table)
  - 3. Draft General Design Recommendations and Design Review Standards table
- E. Draft Resolution directing staff to submit the ordinance to the California Coastal Commission
- F. Examples of Replacement of Subjective Language with Objective Language
- G. Letter from CDRC, dated December 12, 2024
- H. New Fees:
  - 1. Draft Fee Study
  - 2. Draft Resolution amending the Planning and Building Department's Planning Services Fee Schedule to add Design Review fees for Ministerial Review and Exceptions

County of San Mateo  
Planning and Building Department

**RECOMMENDATION**

Permit or Project File Number: PLN2025-00232      Hearing Date: January 28, 2026

Prepared By: Camille Leung, Project Planner      For Adoption By: Board of Supervisors

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

That the Planning Commission recommend that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Determine that the project is exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, under Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the “common sense exemption”;
2. Adopt an ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 8.256 (non-coastal) and Chapter 28.1 (coastal) of the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations), and adopting related zoning text amendments for various zoning districts for consistency with the new ordinance.
3. Adopt a resolution directing staff to submit the ordinance to the Coastal Commission.
4. Adopt a resolution amending the Planning and Building Department’s Planning Services Fee Schedule to revise design review related fees.



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT B

## **ATTACHMENT B**

### **FULL DISCUSSION OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM (LCP)**

Through various policies, as listed below followed by a discussion of project compliance, the LCP encourages the establishment and maintenance of design review districts within Coastal areas of the unincorporated County:

- LCP Policy 8.12 (General Regulations)

*a. Apply the Design Review (DR) Zoning District to urban areas of the Coastal Zone*

*(1) For one- and two-family developments in the Midcoast, apply the design standards contained in Section 6565.20.*

*(2) For all other development, apply the design standards contained in Section 6565.17 and the design criteria set forth in the Community Design Manual.*

The County's adoption of the updated ordinance will consolidate the standards for residential and non-residential projects (see Sections M and N of the standards table of Attachment D3) and revise them such that they are objective.

*b. 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.*

The updated standards include standards for protecting ocean views from public viewing points, specifically Standard A.3.

- LCP Policy 8.13 (Special Design Guidelines for Coastal Communities)

a. Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada-Miramar

*(1) Design structures that fit the topography of the site and do not require extensive cutting, grading, or filling for construction.* The Project includes objective standards to minimize alteration of natural topography and grading (see Section H of the standards table of Attachment D3).

*(2) Employ the use of natural materials and colors that blend with the vegetative cover of the site.* The Project includes objective standards to require the use of materials that are compatible with surrounding natural and built environment (see Section K of the standards table of Attachment D3).

*(3) Use pitched roofs that are surfaced with non-reflective materials except for the employment of solar energy devices. The limited use of flat roofs may be allowed if necessary to reduce view impacts or to accommodate varying architectural styles that are compatible with the character of the surrounding area.* The Project includes objective standards to prohibit the use of reflective finishes for roofing and further allows for flat roofs in the Midcoast than the current standards to accommodate contemporary architectural styles which have been popular (see Section F of the standards table of Attachment D3).

*(4) Design structures that are in scale with the character of their setting and blend rather than dominate or distract from the overall view of the urban landscape.* The Project includes objective standards to regulate the scale of development such that it is compatible with surrounding development (see Sections B and C of the standards table of Attachment D3).

*(5) To the extent feasible, design development to minimize the blocking of views to or along the ocean shoreline from Highway 1 and other public viewpoints between Highway 1 and the sea. Public viewpoints include coastal roads, roadside rests and vista points, recreation areas, trails, coastal accessways, and beaches. This provision shall not apply in areas west of Denniston Creek zoned either Coastside Commercial*

*Recreation or Waterfront.* The Project includes standards for protecting ocean views from public viewing points, specifically Standard A.3.

*(6) In areas east of Denniston Creek zoned Coastside Commercial Recreation, the height of development may not exceed 28 feet from the natural or finished grade, whichever is lower. This requirement is included in the CCR zoning (see below) and does not need to be repeated in the DR standards:*

*CCR Zoning District Section 6269.3 Building Height Limit. The maximum building height is thirty-six (36) feet, except when a lower limit is imposed in accordance with this Chapter, and except in areas east of Denniston Creek, where the maximum building height shall be twenty-eight (28) feet from the natural or finished grade, whichever is lower. Height is measured from finished grade to the highest point of the roof.*

b. Princeton-by-the-Sea

*(1) Commercial Development: Design buildings which reflect the nautical character of the harbor setting, are of wood or shingle siding, employ natural or sea colors, and use pitched roofs.*

*(2) Industrial Development: Employ architectural detailing, subdued colors, textured building materials, and landscaping to add visual interest and soften the harsh lines of standard or stock building forms normally used in industrial districts.*

The Project includes objective standards to reflect these requirements, specifically Standards D.3 and K.5.

c. San Gregorio

*Encourage new buildings to incorporate traditional design features found in the San Gregorio House and other houses in the community, i.e., clean and simple lines, steep roof slopes, placement of windows and doors at regular intervals, doors and windows of equal proportions, and wood construction. Require remodeling of existing buildings to*

*retain and respect their traditional architectural features, if any.* The Project includes objective standards to reflect these requirements, specifically Standard D.4.

d. Pescadero

*Encourage new buildings to incorporate architectural design features found in the historic buildings of the community (see inventory listing), i.e., clean and simple lines, precise detailing, steep roof slopes, symmetrical relationship of windows and doors, wood construction, white paint, etc. Require remodeling of existing buildings to retain and respect their traditional architectural features, if any.* The Project includes objective standards to reflect these requirements, specifically Standard D.5.

- Policy 8.32 (Regulation of Scenic Corridors in Urban Areas)

*a. Apply the regulations of the Design Review (DR) Zoning Ordinance.*

*b. Apply the design criteria of the Community Design Manual.*

*c. Apply specific design guidelines for Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton-by-the-Sea, Miramar, San Gregorio, and Pescadero as set forth in Urban Design Policies of the LCP.*

The Project maintains and improves the objectivity of specific design guidelines for Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton-by-the-Sea, Miramar, San Gregorio, and Pescadero as set forth in Urban Design Policies of the LCP.

- Policy 9.18.b (Regulation of Development on 30% or Steeper Slopes)

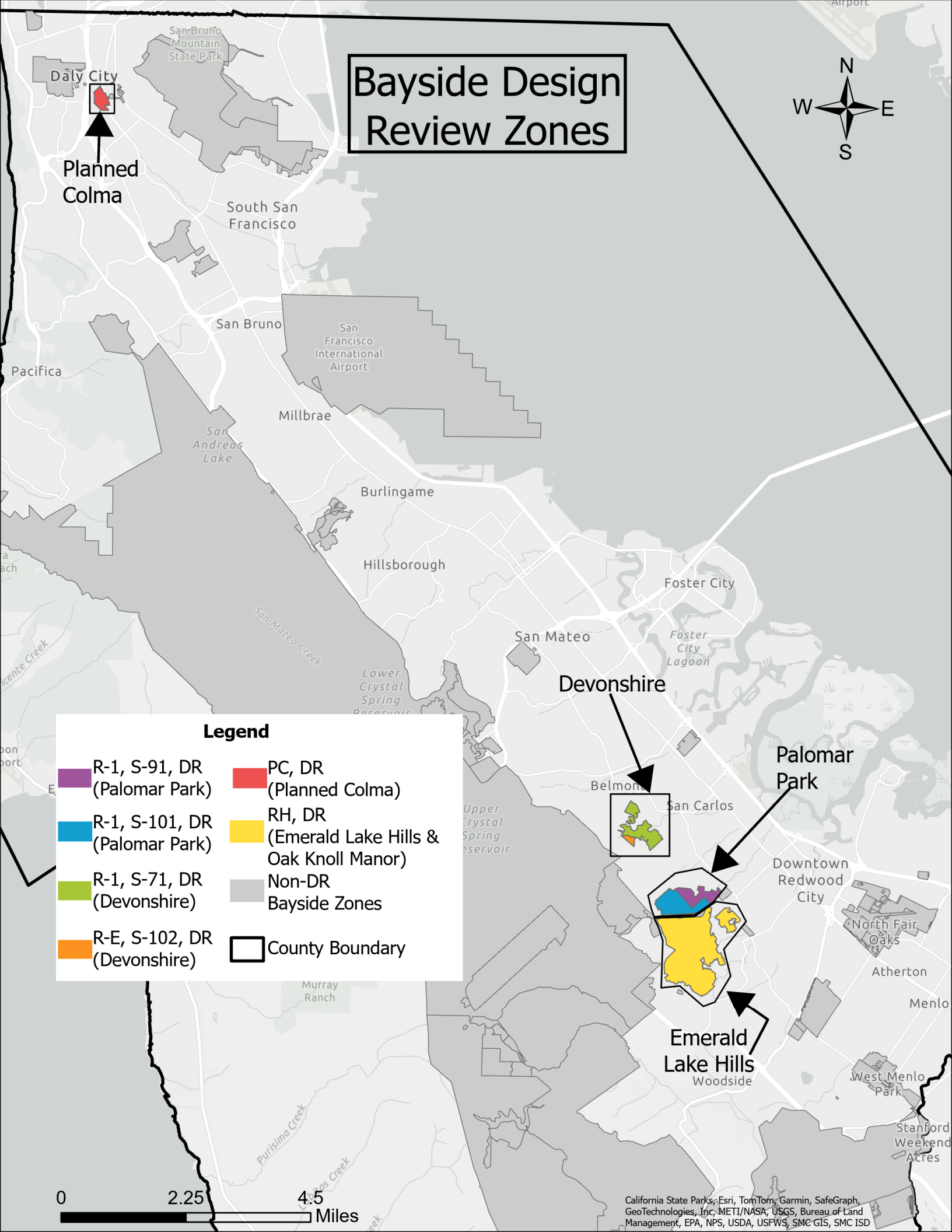
*Employ the siting and grading criteria of the Design Review Zoning Ordinance and the Community Design Manual for Development on Slopes 30% or Greater.* The Project includes objective standards to minimize alteration of natural topography and grading, including on slopes 30% or greater (see Section H of the standards table of Attachment D3).











COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT C1

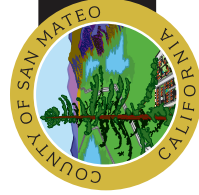
# Bayside Design Review Zones



## Legend

- |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  R-1, S-91, DR (Palomar Park)  |  PC, DR (Planned Colma)                        |
|  R-1, S-101, DR (Palomar Park) |  RH, DR (Emerald Lake Hills & Oak Knoll Manor) |
|  R-1, S-71, DR (Devonshire)    |  Non-DR Bayside Zones                          |
|  R-E, S-102, DR (Devonshire)   |  County Boundary                               |





COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT C2

# Design Review Zones of the Coastsides



0 2 4 Miles



El Granada

## 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

HMB  
Airport



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT 8%

**ORDINANCE NO. [REDACTED]**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO,**  
**STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

\* \* \* \* \*

**AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REPLACING  
CHAPTER 8.256 (NON-COASTAL) AND CHAPTER 28.1 (COASTAL)  
OF THE SAN MATEO COUNTY ORDINANCE CODE (ZONING REGULATIONS)  
REGULATING DESIGN REVIEW (DR) DISTRICTS  
AND RELATED CONFORMING ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California,  
**ORDAINS** as follows

**SECTION 1. Findings.** The Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo (“County”) hereby finds and declares as follows:

**WHEREAS**, in 1976, the County adopted an ordinance establishing Design Review (DR) Districts, now codified as Chapter 8.256 of the County Ordinance Code in areas outside of the Coastal Zone and Section 6565 of the County Zoning Regulations in areas inside of the Coastal Zone (collectively referred to as “Design Review District regulations”); and

**WHEREAS**, the County’s Design Review District regulations, including standards for design, have been amended on multiple occasions since adoption; and

**WHEREAS**, the County’s Design Review District regulations apply to the unincorporated areas of Emerald Lake Hills and Oak Knoll Manor, Devonshire, Palomar

Park, Midcoast, and other unincorporated areas of the County designated as a Design Review District; and

**WHEREAS**, the current design review standards include many standards that are subjective, making such standards difficult to apply consistently and efficiently; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2019 the State legislature declared a State housing shortage crisis and enacted legislation streamlining municipal permitting of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) including limiting application of design review standards to objective standards; and

**WHEREAS**, the State legislature subsequently enacted other legislation streamlining municipal permitting of other housing types, similarly limiting application of design review standards to objective standards; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments to the County Ordinance Code and Zoning Regulations would update standards for design to objective standards that can be applied in compliance with State law; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed amendments to the County Ordinance Code and Zoning Regulations would simplify the design review process by consolidating standards, clarifying confusing standards, and allowing for more design flexibility to reflect contemporary styles; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2025, the County’s Bayside and Coastside Design Review committees reviewed and provided feedback to Planning staff regarding the updated standards for design over several public meetings; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors has determined that adoption of the ordinance repealing and replacing the Design Review District regulations, and making conforming changes to other portions of the Ordinance Code and Zoning Regulations is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the “common sense exemption,” in that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment, and adoption of objective design standards would not cause a physical change in the environment and therefore would not have a significant effect on the environment; and

**WHEREAS**, the County Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing on January 28, 2026, received public comment, and recommended that the Board of Supervisors adopt the ordinance with the updated Design Review District regulations; and

**WHEREAS**, the ordinance is consistent with the County’s Local Coastal Program as described in the Board memorandum accompanying this ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, the ordinance constitutes an amendment to the Local Coastal Program and therefore must be reviewed and certified by the California Coastal Commission prior to taking effect in the coastal zone; and

**WHEREAS**, on adoption by the Board of Supervisors, the ordinance will be submitted to the California Coastal Commission for review and certification; and

**WHEREAS**, the ordinance will ensure that the County's regulations are consistent with State law, easier to interpret and implement, and facilitate streamlined permitting of housing projects.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California, ordains as follows:

\* \* \* \* \*

**SECTION 2. Chapter 8.256 (non-coastal) and Chapter 28.1 (coastal) of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code (Zoning Regulations) are hereby repealed and replaced in their entirety by a new Chapter 8.256 to be numbered and entitled to read as follows: [INSERT DR ZONING DISTRICT TEXT (Attachment D2) FINAL DRAFT]**

**SECTION 3. Related Zoning Text Amendments.** In addition to adding a new chapter of the Zoning Regulations pertaining to Design Review (DR) Districts, the ordinance includes zoning text amendments to Sections 6300.2 (S-17 Combining District), 6300.9.11 (S-94 Combining District), and 6300.14 (S-105 Combining District), of Chapter 20 of the Zoning Regulations, to update design review requirements. Those sections of the Zoning Regulations are amended as indicated below in underline (additions) and ~~strike through~~ (deletions):

**SECTION 6300.2. REGULATIONS FOR “S-17” COMBINING DISTRICT (MIDCOAST).**

9. ~~Daylight Plane or Façade Articulation.~~ New residential development shall conform to ~~either the daylight plane or façade articulation options requirements~~ described in this section, ~~as determined by the project applicant.~~

**SECTION 6300.9.11.100. REGULATIONS FOR “S-94” COMBINING DISTRICT (MIDCOAST).**

~~SECTION 6300.9.11.100. DAYLIGHT PLANE OR FAÇADE ARTICULATION.~~ New residential development shall conform to ~~either the daylight plane or façade articulation options requirements~~ described in this section, ~~as determined by the project applicant.~~

1. ~~Daylight Plane Option.~~ The daylight plane shall be established on two opposite house sides, i.e., either from the front and rear setback lines, or from the side setback lines, as determined by the project applicant ~~and approved by the Design Review Committee.~~

The daylight plane shall be measured from the setback line at natural grade, upward a vertical distance of 20 feet, and then inward at an angle of 45° until the maximum building height is reached.

Cornices, canopies, eaves, roof overhangs, chimneys, fire escapes, stairways; landing places; uncovered porches, and similar architectural features may extend into the daylight plane at the front, side, or rear yard, to the extent allowed by Zoning Regulations Section 6406.

Chimneys, pipes, mechanical equipment, antennae, and similar equipment may extend into the daylight plane up to a maximum of 36 feet as required for safety or efficient operation. Dormers, gables and other architectural features located in the center 60% of the house may extend into the angled portion of the daylight plane, ~~subject to Design Review Committee approval,~~ provided that: (a) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 40% of the length of that building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 24 feet. (b) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 30% of the length of that building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 28 feet.

## ~~2. Facade Articulation Option~~

~~Facade articulation shall be provided on all building sides, and is subject to approval by the Design Review Committee. Facade articulation is intended to break up the appearance of shear walls through the placement of projecting or recessing architectural details, including decks, bays, windows, balconies, porches, overhangs, and cantilevered features. In order to approve proposed facade articulation, the Design Review Committee must find that: (1) all building facades are well articulated and proportioned, and (2) each building wall is broken up so as not to appear shear, blank, looming or massive to neighboring properties.~~

## **SECTION 6300.14.90. REGULATIONS FOR “S-105” COMBINING DISTRICT (MIDCOAST).**

~~SECTION 6300.14.90. DAYLIGHT PLANE OR FAÇADE ARTICULATION. New residential development shall conform to either the daylight plane or facade articulation options requirements described in this section, as determined by the project applicant.~~

## ~~4. Daylight Plane Option~~

~~The daylight plane shall be established on two opposite house sides, i.e., either from the front and rear setback lines, or from the side setback lines, as determined by the project applicant and approved by the Design Review Committee.~~

~~The daylight plane shall be measured from the setback line at natural grade, upward a vertical distance of 20 feet, and then inward at an angle of 45° until the maximum building height is reached.~~

~~Cornices, canopies, eaves, roof overhangs, chimneys, fire escapes, stairways; landing places; uncovered porches, and similar architectural features may extend into the daylight plane at the front, side, or rear yard, to the extent allowed by Zoning Regulations Section 6406.~~

~~Chimneys, pipes, mechanical equipment, antennae, and similar equipment may extend into the daylight plane up to a maximum of 36 feet as required for safety or efficient operation. Dormers, gables and other architectural features located in the center 60% of the house may extend into the angled portion of the daylight plane, subject to Design Review Committee approval, provided that: (a) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 40% of the length of that building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 24 feet. (b) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 30% of the length of that building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 28 feet.~~

~~2. Facade Articulation Option~~

~~Facade articulation shall be provided on all building sides, and is subject to approval by the Design Review Committee. Facade articulation is intended to break up the appearance of shear walls through the placement of projecting or recessing architectural details, including decks, bays, windows, balconies, porches, overhangs, and cantilevered features. In order to approve proposed facade articulation, the Design Review Committee must find that: (1) all building facades are well articulated and proportioned, and (2) each building wall is broken up so as not to appear shear, blank, looming or massive to neighboring properties.~~

**SECTION 4. California Environmental Quality Act.** In accordance with California

Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), adoption of the ordinance is covered by the “common sense exemption” in that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment. It can be seen with certainty that the adoption of an ordinance providing objective design standard would not cause a physical change in the environment and therefore would not have a significant effect on the environment.

**SECTION 5. Severability.** If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, it shall not affect the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

**SECTION 6. Publication.** The Clerk shall publish this ordinance in accordance with applicable law.

**SECTION 7. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall be effective thirty (30) days from the passage date thereof, except in the County's Coastal Zone, where it shall be effective immediately upon certification by the California Coastal Commission.

DRAFT



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT D2

# **DRAFT**

## **CHAPTER 8.256. "DR" DISTRICTS** **(DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICTS)**

VERSION DATE: 1/14/26

### **SECTIONS:**

- 8.256.010. ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE, AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT OF DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT
- 8.256.020. ESTABLISHMENT OF DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE, DESIGN REVIEW
- 8.256.030. ADMINISTRATOR AND DESIGN REVIEW OFFICER  
REQUIREMENT FOR DESIGN REVIEW AND APPROVAL
- 8.256.040. EXEMPTIONS
- 8.256.041. APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO MINISTERIAL REVIEW
- 8.256.045. APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO DISCRETIONARY REVIEW
- ~~8.256.050. PRE-DESIGN CONFERENCE~~
- ~~8.256.060. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS~~
- ~~8.256.070. ACTION ON APPLICATION FOR DESIGN REVIEW~~
- ~~8.256.080. PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENT~~
- ~~8.256.090. NOTICE~~
- ~~8.256.100. FINDINGS~~
- ~~8.256.110. APPEALS~~
- ~~8.256.120. AMENDMENT~~
- ~~8.256.130. EXPIRATION~~
- 8.256.140. INSPECTION AND OCCUPANCY, AND MAINTENANCE
- 8.256.141. BUILDING HEIGHT MEASUREMENT IN URBAN MIDCOAST DR DISTRICTS
- 8.256.142. GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING APPLICATION OF DESIGN STANDARDS
- 8.256.170. GENERAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS
- 8.256.180. DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS APPLICATION TABLE
- ~~8.256.150. STANDARDS FOR DESIGN IN EMERALD LAKE HILLS AND OAK KNOLL~~
- ~~8.256.160. MANOR (AREAS ZONED RH/DR) AND DEVONSHIRE STANDARDS FOR DESIGN IN PALOMAR PARK~~
- ~~8.256.170. STANDARDS FOR DESIGN IN OTHER AREAS~~
- 8.256.190. STANDARDS FOR DESIGN IN PLANNED COLMA DISTRICT
- ~~8.256.200. STANDARDS FOR DESIGN FOR ONE-FAMILY AND TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDCOAST (EL GRANADA, MIRAMAR, MOSS BEACH, MONTARA)~~
- 8.256.210. STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF TREES AND VEGETATION
- ~~8.256.220. DROUGHT~~
- ~~8.256.230.6 VIOLATIONS~~
- ~~565-23.~~
- 8.256.255. GLOSSARY

**8.256.010. ESTABLISHMENT AND, PURPOSE, AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT OF DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT.**

- A. In any district which is combined with the "DR" District, the regulations of this Chapter shall apply, except as qualified by Section ~~6565.1.~~ 8.256.010.B.
- B. On parcels zoned Neighborhood Business District (C-1), Resource Management-Coastal Zone (RM-CZ), or Planned Agricultural District (PAD) located in the Midcoast LCP Update Project Area, as shown on the map that is a part of this Chapter, the regulations of this Chapter shall apply only to residential development. If any portion of a structure is used for residential purposes, the entire structure is subject to Design Review.
- C. In addition to the regulations set forth in Chapter ~~8.44427,~~ Section 6550 et seq., proceedings ~~for the determination of an area for to~~ determine whether the application of these regulations should be extended to additional geographic areas may ~~also~~ be initiated by a petition of the majority of the property owners in a given area. Upon receipt of such a petition, the Planning Director of Planning and Building shall set a date of hearing thereof, and give a notice as set forth in ~~Section 6554~~ Chapter 8.444 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code.
- D. In establishing the Design Review District, the Board of Supervisors hereby determines that:
1. Many communities, neighborhoods and areas in this County have ~~deteriorated through poor~~ benefitted from the consistent application of planning, ~~neglect of proper design standards, and which require~~ the erection of buildings and structures ~~that unrelate to the sites,~~ are compatible with the character of the neighborhood, and sensitive to the natural environment, especially in ~~older undeveloped or partially developed platted areas, existing and proposed communities, clustered developments and areas with unique environmental and/or resource value.~~
  2. These conditions promote disharmony, ~~reduce property values,~~ and ~~impair benefit the~~ public health, comfort, convenience, happiness and welfare.
  3. ~~The lack of appropriate guidelines and criteria for the design of new buildings and structures contributes to these conditions.~~
  4. It is necessary and desirable to ~~alleviate these conditions by providing~~ appropriate guidelines and criteria for the maintenance and enhancement of ~~property values,~~ the visual character of especially fragile communities, the natural environmental resources, and the public health, safety, comfort, convenience, happiness and welfare of the citizens of the County.
  5. The review procedures of this Chapter ~~will~~ are intended to more

effectively preserve and enhance the property values, the visual character of especially ~~fragile-unique~~ communities, the natural environmental resources, and the public health, safety, comfort, convenience, happiness, and welfare of the citizens of the County.

E. The purposes of this Chapter are to:

1. ~~To recognize the interdependence of land values and aesthetics and to~~ Provide a method by which the County may encourage builders to develop land so that its value and attractiveness will endure.
2. ~~To e~~Encourage development of private property in harmony with the desired and established character of the community or area in conformance with an adopted set of community design principles as well as the County General Plan, the Local Coastal Program (where applicable), and other pPrecise pPlans.
3. ~~To e~~Encourage residential development that has individual character, while also ensuring that it is complementary with neighboring houses, the neighborhood character of each community, and the surrounding natural setting.
4. ~~To avoid and prevent community deterioration and to encourage the~~ pPreservation and enhancement of property values and the visual character of communities and natural resources.
5. ~~To~~ Improve the general standards of orderly and stable development in the County through review of the design of individual buildings, structures and their setting.
6. ~~To~~ Improve and augment the regulations now included in ordinances related to planning, building and health in order to promote development which is in the best interest to the public health, safety and welfare of the County.
7. ~~To e~~Establish standards and policies that will promote, preserve, and enhance building design, proper site development, and other environmental characteristics in designated communities and areas ~~where previous planning and zoning controls have been found inadequate for these purposes and the economic and physical stability is threatened by new development.~~
8. Establish clear and objective standards that are easy to understand and consistently implement and enforce.

It is not the purpose of this Chapter that regulation of design should be so rigidly interpreted that individual initiative is precluded in the design of any particular building or substantial additional expense is incurred. It is the intent of this Chapter that any regulation exercised shall be that necessary to achieve the

overall objectives of this Chapter.

~~F. Furthermore, it is the intent of this Board that, prior to the review of any application under the procedures set forth in this Chapter, a set of specific design review standards shall be developed for the communities in which the regulations of this Chapter apply. The design review standards shall be developed in accordance with procedures that will insure opportunity for the citizens of such communities to present their view. The design review standards so developed shall be incorporated as part of these regulations and shall be supplemental to the Community Design Manual approved and adopted by the Board of Supervisors as policy for the application of this Chapter.~~

F. The legislative intent of this Chapter is to:

1. Establish design standards that implement relevant policies of the County General Plan and the Local Coastal Program (LCP). The design standards are separate from, but intended to complement, other County ordinances including the Zoning Regulations.
2. Identify that it shall be the responsibility of the applicant and home designer to comply with both the Design Standards and the Zoning Regulations development standards (e.g., height limit, maximum floor area, setbacks and maximum parcel coverage). The emphasis for design review will be on a home's appearance, not on its actual size or height. As such, compliance with design standards will be achieved by requiring design techniques consistent with zoning development standards and, where applicable, LCP policies, that make homes appear smaller, lower or less massive compatible with the unique design characteristics of the community it is located within.
3. Address the relationship of Design Review Standards to other relevant County ordinances and regulations, which include, but are not limited to: (1) the Building Regulations, which establish construction requirements including structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing requirements; (2) Department of Public Works standards for driveways, curb cuts and other work in the public right-of-way; (3) the Protected Tree Ordinance, which establish criteria for tree removal; and (4) the Grading Ordinance, which establishes standards for conducting grading activity. Where conflicts exist between the provisions of this Chapter and the policies of the LCP, the policies of the LCP shall control.
4. Ensure that this Chapter will be enforced in a manner that is consistent with State law.

**8.256.020. ESTABLISHMENT OF DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE, DESIGN REVIEW ADMINISTRATOR AND DESIGN REVIEW OFFICER.**

- A. There is hereby established a Coastside Design Review Committee consisting of three members to be appointed by the Board of Supervisors.
1. Appointments shall be for three-year terms, except that the initial members shall be appointed to a one-year, a two-year and a three-year term so that subsequently one appointment shall expire each year. The Board of Supervisors may adjust the terms of any appointment to assure such overlap in terms occurs.
  2. Members shall be residents of San Mateo County. Two members shall be licensed architects or landscape architects. The third member shall be a resident of the unincorporated community in which the project being reviewed is located, ~~as listed in Section 6565.7.2. For communities where an advisory council has been established by the Board of Supervisors, the advisory council shall make a recommendation on resident third member candidates prior to appointment by the Board of Supervisors. The terms of the residents designated to serve on the Design Review Committee shall be three years.~~ If the member from the unincorporated community in which the project being reviewed is located is not available, the nearest residing member of the CDRC to the project location may act on the project.
  3. Two members present shall constitute a quorum and two votes shall be required for action.
  4. The Board of Supervisors will appoint alternates for each member with the same terms and qualifications.
  5. The Coastside Design Review Committee shall adopt rules for the conduct of its business and a conflict of interest code.
  6. Members shall be paid ~~\$10050.00~~ per meeting not to exceed ~~\$20050.00~~ per month.
- B. The Director of Planning and Building is the Design Review Administrator and may appoint in writing ~~an assistant(s)~~ to act as Design Review Officer(s), who may exercise all of the powers of the Design Review Administrator.

**8.256.030. REQUIREMENT FOR DESIGN REVIEW AND APPROVAL.** This Chapter shall apply in any district which is combined with the "DR" District, and shall apply to all new exterior alteration or construction ~~which requires a building permit, grading or land clearing that requires a grading permit, or tree cutting that requires a tree cutting permit, unless the activity is determined to be exempt in accordance with Section 6565.4 below.~~ All applicable activities shall be reviewed for conformance with this Chapter. No such applicable activity shall commence unless the design of the project has been approved.

**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 s~~ 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.

#### **8.256.041 APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO MINISTERIAL REVIEW**

A. Applicable Areas: Review for projects in the following areas shall be taken following a ministerial process:

1. Emerald Lake Hills and Oak Knoll Manor (areas zoned RH/DR only)
2. Palomar Park
3. Devonshire

B. Process:

1. No separate permit shall be required.
2. Applicant shall complete a Planning Permit Application form. If a building permit is required for the project, completion of the building permit application

form is sufficient.

3. The burden shall be on the property owner, project designer and permit applicant to demonstrate that the design of the project conforms to the standards and guidelines for design review applicable to the location of the project.
4. The applicant shall provide plans and specifications that accurately reflect the entire exterior appearance of the proposal and associated site work. The DRA may require additional information as determined to be necessary for evaluation of the development plans for compliance with applicable design standards.
5. The DRA's ministerial decision regarding compliance with design standards is not subject to public review and is not appealable.

**8.256.045 APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO DISCRETIONARY REVIEW**  
**SECTION 6565.7. ACTION ON APPLICATION FOR DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT.**

A. Applicable Areas: Action on an application for a Design Review Permit for projects in the following areas shall be discretionary and by the specified decision maker:

1. Review or action on an application for a Design Review Permit shall be taken by the Coastside Design Review Committee, following the discretionary procedure outlined in this Section, for projects located in the Midcoast on parcels in the Midcoast LCP Update Project Area. This section applies to (residential development only), i.e., single-family or multiple-family residential construction, including residential/commercial mixed-use development) on parcels in the Midcoast LCP Update Project Area, as shown on the map that is part of this Chapter.

In all other areas within the Design Review District in the Coastal Zone, and for projects with no residential component in the Midcoast LCP Update Project Area, discretionary review or action on an application for a Design Review permit shall be taken by the Design Review Administrator.

2. When the project in question requires another permit or approval, such as (but not limited to) a use permit, variance or subdivision, to be acted upon by the Director of Planning and Building, Zoning Hearing Officer, Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, then the action of the Coastside Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator shall be in the form of a recommendation to the decision-maker on the other permit(s), who shall act upon the application for design review only after receiving and considering such recommendation. In such cases, the decision-maker may refer any revisions to the design of the project back to the Coastside Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator for further recommendation prior to taking action on the project.

3. The Coastside Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator may refer any matter directly to the Planning Commission when, in their opinion, such action will be in the public interest.

~~Action on an application for Design Review shall be to: (a) approve the application and plans as submitted, (b) approve them with modifications,, or (c) disapprove the application and plans.~~

B. Pre-Design Conference. Prior to beginning design of a project in the Design Review District subject to Section 8.256.045 and submitting an application for Design Review, the project ~~designer and owner, or their designer or other designee,~~ shall request and shall participate in a pre-design conference with the Design Review Administrator. During the pre-design conference, ~~the Design Review Administrator staff shall provide the designer and owner with written copies of the~~ identify zoning regulations and design review standards and guidelines applicable to the property and project in question, shall review the applicable design review process, same with the designer and owner and shall answer any associated questions concerning appropriate design of the project. The intent of the pre-design conference is to assure that the designer and owner are aware of the design standards and ~~expectations of the County requirements and processes~~ prior to commencing design of a project's submittal of a permit application.

C. Application Requirements. Applications for a Design Review Permit shall be submitted on forms supplied as specified by the Design Review Administrator who shall prescribe the format and scope of all applications and establish filing deadlines subject to any provisions of State law or County ordinances or policies.

The application for a Design Review Permit shall contain or be accompanied by materials as listed and specified in an application submittal checklist as supplied by the Design Review Administrator, including but not limited to the following information :- ~~{Plans and specifications submitted with an application for design review shall accurately reflect the entire exterior appearance of the proposal and associated site work, but should be preliminary rather than construction drawings, as they may be subject to revision in whole or in part during the design review process.}~~

1. ~~Location map showing the building site, adjacent lots and streets. Indicate if adjacent lots are developed or vacant.~~

B.2. Site plan, at a minimum scale of 1 inch = 20 feet, clearly showing:

1. ~~Property lines.~~
2. ~~Size of parcel.~~
3. ~~Existing and proposed ground contours.~~
4. ~~All existing trees and those to be removed and their size.~~
5. ~~Easements and utility lines.~~
6. ~~Percentage of lot coverage.~~

- ~~7. Dimensions of setbacks.~~
- ~~8. All existing and proposed improvements, including buildings, structures, decks, paving, fences, signs, etc.~~
- ~~9. Where applicable, proposed septic leach field lines.~~

~~C.3. Building elevations, including color of materials or finish, at a minimum scale of 1/4 inch = 1 foot, clearly showing:~~

- ~~10. All exterior walls.~~
  - ~~11. Natural grade in relation to all exterior walls.~~
  - ~~12. Building heights of all elevations.~~
  - ~~13. Roof equipment, trash enclosures, fences, signs, exterior lights, and other structures or fixtures.~~
  - ~~14. Type of roof and exterior materials to be used.~~
  - ~~15. Color of materials or finish.~~
- a. Floor Plans
  - b. Roof Plan
  - c. Tree Plan showing proposed tree removals and required replacement trees.
  - d. A stamped boundary survey as required by County policy
  - e. Exterior Lighting
  - f. Landscape plans for new homes (not ADUs). All submitted landscape plans shall follow minimum standards set by the Planning Director available at the offices of the San Mateo County Planning Division.
  - g. Project data table showing calculations necessary to demonstrate compliance with applicable development standards of the applicable zoning district.
  - h. A written explanation of how and why the design of the project conforms to the standards and guidelines for design review applicable to the location of the project.
  - i. Floor area ratio as specified in the Residential Hillside (RH) zoning

district regulations (Emerald Lake Hills and Oak Knoll Manor only).

- j. ~~Building floor area as specified in the S-70, S-90, and S-100 zoning district regulations (Palomar Park and Devonshire).~~
  
- h. Plans showing All-proposed grading (cut and fill) and the total amount of grading in cubic yards. (Emerald Lake Hills and Oak Knoll Manor only). Any additional information as determined by the Design Review Administrator necessary for evaluation of the development plans.
  
- i. Demonstration of Scale (Applications subject to Section 8.256.045 (Discretionary Review) for consideration by the Coastside Design Review Committee)
  - 1. Applicant shall visually demonstrate project scale using story poles at the project site.
  - 2. For smaller scale projects, as defined below, alternative methods to demonstrate scale (such as digital imaging simulations, virtual or augmented reality simulations, and/or other visual techniques) may be used. Small scale projects include:
    - a. New buildings and additions that are 800 sq. ft. or less in size, which meet criteria below:
      - i. Meets setback requirements;
      - ii. Less than 16 feet in height; or Ground-floor additions; or Second or third-story additions that do not alter the roofline of an existing structure;
    - b. Projects that are not visible from public streets or neighboring residences within 50 feet, based on staff determination.
  - 3. Story poles shall be constructed according to the following specifications:
    - a. Story poles shall be placed at all outside building corners and along the highest roof ridgeline. The elevation of the lowest finished floor and highest ridge shall be visibly marked on the pole. In order to identify the building envelope and the ridgeline, netting shall be extended on grade, from one corner pole to the other and atop one pole to another along the direction of the ridgeline, respectively. The netting used shall be orange snow fencing material, or comparable netting, measuring at least 24 inches in width.
    - b. The story pole material shall be constructed of 2"x4" lumber or other sturdy material and should be properly braced and supported to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public. Story poles shall be independently supported, whenever possible.

- c. The applicant shall affix a tape measure to the vertical pole supporting the highest point of the project. The tape measure shall be installed upside down so that the maximum height of the project is displayed at the bottom of the pole. Story poles shall not require survey or certification.
- 4. The applicant is not required to modify story poles to reflect changes to the design of the project as a result of the CDRC public hearing(s).
- 5. Story poles shall remain in place for at least one CDRC hearing and may be removed prior to a decision on the project. Prior to removal of the story poles, the applicant shall take photos of all sides of the story poles and shall send photos to the DRO and project planner. Story poles shall be removed no later than seven days following a CDRC decision or recommendation on the application.
- j. Fees as set by resolution of the Board of Supervisors.

The Design Review Administrator may require additional information as necessary for evaluation of the development plans.

#### **8.256.070. ACTION ON APPLICATION FOR DESIGN REVIEW.**

- A. ~~Review or action on an application for Design Review shall be taken by the Design Review Committee for projects located in the following communities:~~
  - a. ~~Emerald Lake Hills and Oak Knoll Manor (areas zoned RH/DR only).~~
  - b. ~~Palomar Park.~~
  - c. ~~Devonshire.~~
  - d. ~~Midcoast (residential development only), i.e., single-family or multiple-family residential construction, including residential/commercial mixed-use development on parcels in the Midcoast LCP Update Project Area, as shown on the map that is part of this Chapter.~~

~~In all other areas within the Design Review District, review or action shall be by the Design Review Administrator.~~

- B. ~~When the project in question requires another permit or approval, such as (but not limited to) a use permit, variance or subdivision, to be acted upon by the Zoning Hearing Officer, Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, then the action of the Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator shall be in the form of a recommendation to the decision-maker on the other permit(s), who shall act upon the application for design review only after receiving and considering such recommendation. In such cases, the decision-maker may refer any revisions to the design of the project back to~~

~~the Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator for further recommendation prior to taking action on the project.~~

~~C. The Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator may refer any matter directly to the Planning Commission when, in their opinion, such action will be in the public interest.~~

~~D. Action on an application for Design Review shall be to: (a) approve the application and plans as submitted, (b) approve them with modifications, or (c) disapprove the application and plans.~~

D. Public Hearing and Comment.

~~When action or recommendation on an application for Design Review is to be by the Design Review Committee~~

1. Applicants shall complete the demonstration of scale requirements and post the required notice at least 10 calendar days prior to the scheduled Coastside Design Review Committee hearing date, unless the Coastside Design Review Committee finds a shorter duration is acceptable.
2. ~~The Coastside Design Review Committee shall first hold a public hearing to receive comments on the project. Such hearings shall be sufficiently structured to assure that the comments of any interested person are considered and recorded prior to action, but shall be conducted in a manner which encourages the free and informal exchange of ideas between the owner, project designer, and the Coastside Design Review Committee.~~
3. ~~When action or recommendation is to be by the Design Review Administrator, the Administrator shall consider any comments received from any interested party prior to action and shall consult with the project designer or owner prior to taking any action or making any recommendation other than approval as submitted.~~

**8.256.090.** E. Notice.

1. Public notice of each application for Design Review shall be provided at least 10 calendar days prior to any of the following:
  - a. Public hearing and action by the Coastside Design Review Committee on a Design Review Permit application.
  - b. Public hearing and recommendation by the Coastside Design Review Committee to another decision-maker on a Design Review Permit application.
  - c. Action by the Design Review Administrator on a Design Review Permit application.

2. Notice ~~required by Section 8.256.090.A6565.8.1, above,~~ shall be provided by written mailed notice to:
  - a. The owner of the property which is the subject of the application.
  - ~~b. The project applicant as listed on the application. The project designer as listed on the application.~~
  - c. All owners of property, as shown on the last equalized assessment roll, within ~~three hundred (300) feet~~ (or the notification area required for any other permit required for the project, whichever is greater) of the exterior limits of the subject property and any adjoining property owned by the same owner for which the application is proposed.
- ~~1. Any person who has requested notice of all Design Review applications within that community within the preceding year.~~
3. A notice of a pending application for building or grading permits for which require design review under this Chapter and tree cutting permits shall be conspicuously posted at eye level at the front of the property nearest the street in a manner outlined in paragraph 1, above of this section. Such notices shall be on forms provided by the County. Public notice shall be provided at least 10 calendar days prior to a decision.
4. Written notice of the findings and the decision on an application for Design Review shall be mailed to the applicant by first-class mail at the address set forth in the application and to any other person who has filed a written request therefore with the Design Review Administrator.

**8.256.100. F. Findings and Decision.**

1. The burden shall be on the property owner, project designer and permit applicant to demonstrate that the design of the project conforms to the standards and guidelines for design review applicable to the location of the project.
2. Action on an application for Design Review shall be to: (a) approve the application and plans as submitted, (b) approve them with modifications, (c) continue review of the application to allow the applicant to address concerns, as specified by the Coastside Design Review Committee at a hearing pursuant to Section 8.256.045.D, or (c) disapprove the application and plans.
3. In acting on an application for Design Review, the Coastside Design Review Committee, the Design Review Administrator or other decision-maker on the application shall make written findings stating how and why the project does or does not conform to the standards and guidelines for design review applicable to the location of the project.
4. In making such findings, the decision-maker shall apply the following principles:

- a. Regulation of design should not be so rigidly enforced that individual initiative is precluded in the design of any particular building or substantial additional expense incurred. The regulation exercised should be that necessary to achieve the overall objectives as set forth in Section 8.256.0106565.1.4.
- b. Appropriate design is based upon the suitability of a building for its purposes, upon the appropriate use of sound materials and upon the principles of harmony and proportion in the elements of the building.
- c. Appropriate design is not based on economic factors alone.

**8.256.110. G. Appeals.**

1. ~~Discretionary~~ Decisions on Design Review, made by the Coastside Design Review Committee, the Design Review Administrator or the Zoning Hearing Officer may be appealed to the Planning Commission within ~~ten (10)~~ working days only by aggrieved persons. Notice of the public hearing shall be provided as specified in Section 8.256.045.D6565.9. The Planning Commission shall review and consider points of appeal for each Design Review application. The decision of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors following the same procedures as for appeals to the Planning Commission.
2. For purposes of this section, "aggrieved person" means any person who, in person or through a representative, appeared at a public hearing or by other appropriate means prior to action on an application for Design Review informed the County of ~~his or her~~ their concerns about an application for such permit or who for good cause was unable to do either, and who objects to the action taken on such permit and wishes to appeal such action to a higher authority.

**8.256.120. H. Amendment.**

1. Subsequent to the ~~granting completion of a~~ Design Review approval pursuant to ~~this Chapter Sections 8.256.041 and 8.256.045~~, the Design Review Administrator may approve amendments to the approved plans which, in the judgment of the Design Review Administrator, are minor in nature, without the public notice, hearing or appeal otherwise required or authorized by this Chapter. Such approval shall be in writing. Other amendments shall be processed as for new applications.
2. Minor amendments may include, but are not limited to: interior modifications; relocations of doors and windows; adjustments in roof pitch or design; minor relocations of walls, fences or signs; and other adjustments in design, all only to the extent that they will not, in the judgment of the Design Review Administrator, have an adverse effect on compliance with design standards or guidelines or zoning regulations applicable to the project.

### **8.256.130. I. Expiration.**

1. Design approvals granted pursuant to Section 8.256.045~~this Chapter~~ shall expire five ~~(5)~~ years from the date of the final approval of a Design Review Permit if all other permits required for the project have not been obtained and construction begun.
2. Upon written request of the property owner, and for good cause, the Design Review Administrator may extend the expiration date~~period~~ for design approvals one year at a time.

### **J. Exceptions.**

#### **1. Minor Exceptions:**

For discretionary permits, the Coastside Design Review Committee may approve a minor design exception from the standards in Section 8.256.180 upon finding that an application is in substantial conformance with the design review standards.

For ministerial design approvals, a minor design exception from the standards in Sections 8.256.180 may be granted by the DRA upon making the following findings:

That the exception 1) is necessary for compliance with the site planning and design requirements; 2) will not jeopardize public safety; 3) is in substantial conformance with the design review standards; 4) will be compatible with the neighborhood surrounding the parcel, and 5) will not be detrimental to the public welfare.

The DRA may require modifications to the proposal, including design, location, materials, colors, and landscaping requirements. The DRA's decision on an exception authorized by this Section shall not require a public hearing. The DRA's decision may be appealed to the Planning Commission, as specified in Section 8.256.045.

2. Major Exceptions: The Planning Commission, at a public hearing, may grant a use permit to grant an exception from any provision in this Chapter which is not a minor design exception, subject to the findings listed in Section 8.256.045.J.1.

**8.256.140. INSPECTION, AND OCCUPANCY, AND MAINTENANCE.** Before a certificate of occupancy, building permit final approval, or final approval is issued, the completed building project must be inspected for compliance with the approved plans decision on the Design Review application. Building design (including size, shape, height) shall be maintained as approved. Approved landscaping shall be maintained in healthy condition for the life of the project. Trees and plants that have died shall be replaced.

### **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.

### **8.256.142. GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING APPLICATION OF DESIGN STANDARDS**

**8.256.142. GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING APPLICATION OF DESIGN STANDARDS** ~~SECTION 6565.20. STANDARDS FOR DESIGN FOR ONE-FAMILY AND TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDCOAST (EL GRANADA, MIRAMAR, MOSS BEACH, MONTARA).~~

**A. BACKGROUND**

1. Application

~~The following design standards shall apply to all one-family (single-family) and two-family (duplex) development in all areas zoned "Design Review" (DR) within the urban Midcoast (El Granada, Miramar, Moss Beach, and Montara). Where used in this document, the terms "house," "home" and "single-family" shall also refer to two-family or duplex residential development.~~

This section is intended to provide a detailed discussion of principles for applying applicable standards for a project as outlined in this Chapter, where not all principles are applicable to development in all design review areas.

Where used in this document, the terms "house," "home" and "single-family" shall also refer to two-family or duplex residential development.

2. Setting

~~The Midcoast has a unique character that makes it a desirable place to live. Although it is only a few miles from the more heavily urbanized Bayside, the Midcoast has a coastal, semi-rural, small town, diverse character that residents value and want to preserve. It is a collection of five distinct communities (Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton and Miramar), each with individual neighborhoods differing in architecture, size, scale and character. The individuality of each community is vital to the overall character of the Midcoast. Residents and visitors alike also enjoy the area's many natural amenities, including the beaches and bluffs, creeks and streams, hillsides and mountains.~~

3. Purpose/Legislative Intent

The purposes of the Design Review Districts Chapter (Chapter 28.1) are contained in Section 6565.1.D. Consistent with Section 6565.1.D, the purpose of the Midcoast design standards is to encourage new single-family homes and additions that have their own individual character, while ensuring that they are complementary with neighboring houses, the neighborhood character of each Midcoast community, and the surrounding natural setting.

The ~~Midcoast~~ design standards are intended for use by homeowners, builders, architects and designers, by neighbors, and by community groups in their consideration of new single-family homes and additions to existing homes. The Design Review Administrator, the Coastside Design Review Committee, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will also use these standards in their review of projects, as set forth in this ChapterSection 6565.7.

~~Each design topic in Sections 6565.20(C) through (G) is divided into two sections: (a) a discussion with illustrations section, and (b) a design standards section. The discussion and illustrations provided here are section is intended to explain the reasons for the standards and to provide further clarification of the standards' objectives. Illustrations represent examples of how standards may be applied to a design style and are not intended to restrict the range of potential design styles. The design standards section states the regulatory standards. Only the design standards section has the force of law and constitutes the regulatory criteria by which project will be reviewed.~~

~~Consistent with Section 6565.1.0, the design standards are not intended to preclude individual initiative in the design of any particular project, nor to require that substantial additional expense be incurred. There are a variety of creative ways in which a dwelling can be designed to comply with the standards, but still retain its own individual identity. By thoughtful application of the standards and balancing of the design objectives embodied in the standards, an architect or designer can achieve compliance with these design standards and reduce a project's potential to cause conflict, avoiding costly delays caused by subsequent project revisions.~~

~~When the term "to the extent feasible" is used, it shall mean that if a house building can be designed to comply with that standard, without conflicting with other applicable design and zoning requirements, the house building shall comply with the standard. If a building cannot be designed to comply with the standard, it shall be designed to substantially comply.~~

#### ~~4. Relationship to Other County Regulations~~

~~In the Midcoast LCP Land Use Area, the design standards are intended to implement the County General Plan and the Local Coastal Program (LCP). The design standards are separate from, but intended to complement, other required County ordinances including the Zoning Regulations which establish development standards for single family and two family residential development.~~

~~Consistent with Section 6565.10, it shall be the responsibility of the applicant and home designer to comply with both the Design Standards and~~

the Zoning Regulations development standards (e.g., height limit, maximum floor area, setbacks and maximum parcel coverage). The emphasis for design review will be on a home's appearance, not on its actual size or height. As such, compliance with design standards will be achieved by requiring design techniques consistent with zoning development standards and, where applicable, LCP policies, that make homes appear smaller, lower or less massive; house size or height reductions will not be required unless otherwise required by LCP policies.

Other relevant County ordinances include, but are not limited to: (1) the Building Regulations, which establish construction requirements including structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing requirements; (2) Department of Public Works standards for driveways, curb cuts and other work in the public right-of-way; (3) the Heritage and Significant Protected Tree Ordinance, which establish criteria for tree removal; and (4) the Grading Ordinance, which establishes standards for conducting grading activity.

Where conflicts exist between the provisions of this section and the policies of the LCP, the policies of the LCP shall control.

## **SECTION 6565.20(B). N-B. NEIGHBORHOOD DEFINITION AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER**

### 1. Neighborhood Definition



Figure 1 - Neighborhood

**Definition:** A neighborhood is defined as the area within 300 feet of an existing or proposed house. Certain factors may be present which would further define or alter the limit of a neighborhood, making it larger or smaller, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Significant changes in topography;
- b. Changes in land use such as from residential to commercial;
- c. Proximity to designated open space or urban/rural boundary;
- d. Changes in the land subdivision pattern;
- e. A wide street or natural feature such as a riparian corridor;
- f. Noticeable changes in building type, such as from one-story to two-story homes;
- g. Visibility from off-site vantage points in the vicinity of the project.

2. Neighborhood Context

**Discussion:** What is a neighborhood? One of the first steps in designing a new home or an addition to an existing home is to understand the neighborhood in which the home is located. A neighborhood generally has two components: (1) the immediate context, or how a house relates to adjacent houses and natural features, and (2) the neighborhood context, or how a house relates to the visual character and scale of other houses and natural features in the vicinity.

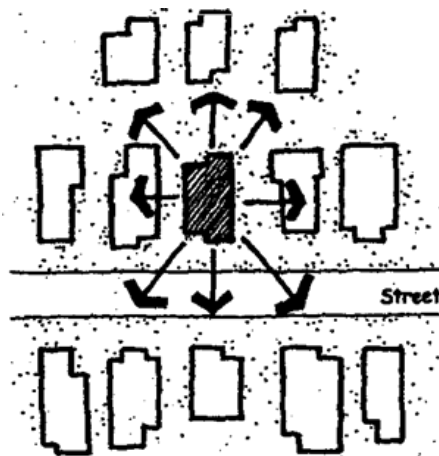


Figure 2 - Neighborhood Context

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Neighborhood Limits

**Discussion:** The process of defining a neighborhood begins by defining the immediate area surrounding a house as within 300 feet. Then, other factors may be considered that would further influence the limit of a neighborhood, making it larger or smaller, such as noticeable changes in topography, or proximity to open space or the urban/rural boundary.

**Definition:** A neighborhood is defined as the area within 300 feet of an existing or proposed house. Certain factors may be present which would further define or alter the limit of a neighborhood, making it larger or smaller, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Significant changes in topography;
2. Changes in land use such as from residential to commercial;
3. Proximity to designated open space or urban/rural boundary;
4. Changes in the land subdivision pattern;
5. A wide street or natural feature such as a riparian corridor;
6. Noticeable changes in building type, such as from one-story to two-story homes;
7. Visibility from off-site vantage points in the vicinity of the project.

### 3. Neighborhood Character

**Discussion:** What is neighborhood character? Neighborhood character is the combination of qualities or features within a neighborhood that distinguishes it from another neighborhood. For the purposes of these design standards, the key qualities or features of single-family residential neighborhoods include the appearance of the homes (e.g., architectural style and elements), the collective appearance of the homes (e.g., pattern, scale, size), and the appearance of natural features (e.g., natural vegetation, landforms).

How does a house contribute to the visual character of a neighborhood? The architectural elements of a house such as its shape, the arrangement of its doors and windows, its roof style, and its architectural style all contribute to the appearance of the house, which in turn contributes to the collective appearance or character of the neighborhood. Some of the most common architectural elements that contribute to the character of an individual house and the collective character of the neighborhood are listed below:

- a. How houses are sited on their lots;
- b. How houses blend with surrounding scenic and natural environments;
- c. Architectural style, including how house styles compare, contrast or complement each other;

- d. Scale, or the appearance or proportion of a house relative to others, including the number of stories;
- e. Arrangement/placement/massing of major building forms;
- f. Parking and garage patterns;
- g. Location of entries;
- h. Roof forms;
- i. Exterior materials and colors;
- j. Window type and placement;
- k. Landscaping;
- l. Older buildings or features having historic character.

~~Definition: Neighborhood character is defined as the combination of qualities or features within a neighborhood that distinguishes it from another neighborhood. The key qualities or features of single-family residential neighborhoods include the appearance of the homes (e.g., architectural style and elements), the collective appearance of the homes (e.g., pattern, scale, size) and the appearance of natural features (e.g., natural vegetation, landforms).~~

### **SECTION 6565.20(C). C. SITE PLANNING AND STRUCTURE PLACEMENT.**

One of the key elements that define the visual character of an individual house and the neighborhood is how it is located or placed on its site. A single building out of context with its site or neighboring houses can appear disruptive.

#### 1. Integrate Structures with the Natural Setting

New houses, additions and accessory structures should be located, designed and constructed to retain and blend with the natural vegetation and natural landforms of the site, and should be complementary to adjacent neighborhood structures.

##### a. Trees and Vegetation

**Discussion:** When siting a new home or an addition on a parcel, the goal should be to disturb as little vegetation as possible, with priority placed on retaining healthy, native species and those trees that are ~~heritage or significant~~ protected trees by definition. Fire prevention

measures, such as defensible space requirements, should also be considered. Refer to County fire hazard prevention requirements.

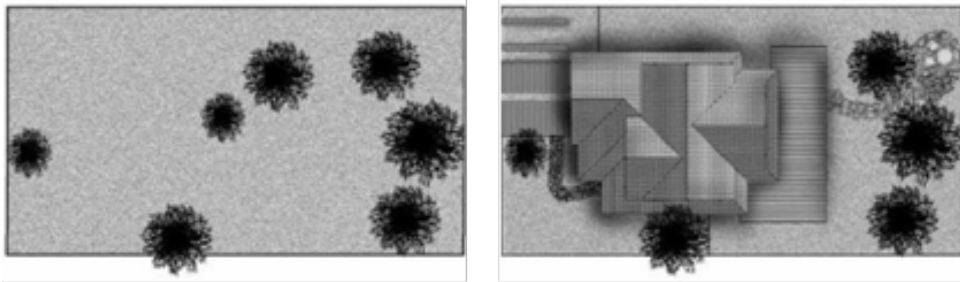


Figure 3 - On left: Undeveloped site; On right: Sensitive site development to retain vegetation and other natural features

b. Grading

**Discussion:** As defined in the County Grading Ordinance, grading is any excavating, filling, or placement of earth materials or a combination of these activities. Excavation (or cutting) is the mechanical removal of earth material, while filling is the deposit of earth or waste material placed by artificial means. The following design standards are intended to regulate the aesthetic aspects of grading; the technical aspects of grading are regulated by the County Grading Ordinance. In the interest of retaining as much of the natural character of the site as possible, an effort should be made to place structures so that grading activity and the area disturbed by grading is limited; however, on sloping sites and where a basement is proposed, it is recognized that a certain amount of excavation may be necessary so that the end result is a house that blends into the site.

Do This



Not This



Figure 4 – On left: Structure is designed to blend with the natural contours and feature on the site. Only grading necessary for construction was used. On right: Structure is not suited to the terrain. Extensive grading was used to create building pad, and to terrace site beyond the immediate vicinity of the structure.

c. Streams and Other Drainage Features

**Discussion:** ~~The~~ Some areas of the Midcoast communities are crossed by a number of streams. In the Midcoast, as well as in Emerald Lake Hills, Devonshire, and Palomar Park ~~addition~~, many less developed drainage features including swales, gullies and ditches cross the area. In the Coastal Zone, if there is a stream or other drainage feature on or adjacent to your property, you should consult the Local Coastal Program Sensitive Habitats Component for policies related to sensitive habitats, riparian corridors and wetlands to determine if these policies apply.

All streams and natural drainage features should be avoided when deciding where structures should be placed to protect them from erosion, siltation and polluted runoff. Man-made drainage features may be covered or relocated in order to conform with the design standards of this section, provided that: (1) sensitive habitats are not disturbed and (2) alterations are done pursuant to a drainage plan prepared by a registered civil engineer and reviewed and approved by the Planning and Building Division.

Builders should also take advantage of the opportunity to improve local storm drainage systems and protect streams and drainage features from erosion, siltation, and polluted runoff by improving water retention and movement on site, prohibiting runoff onto neighboring properties, and preventing overloading of local stormwater systems. Please refer to Chapter 8.256.180(Section 6565.20(E)) for guidelines regarding landscaping and paved areas that should be used to enhance project appearance and stormwater pollution control. Please also refer to the County's Drainage Manual for specific requirements. ~~Stormwater Pollution Prevention program publications, available at the Planning Counter, for further information and innovative ideas on this topic.~~

**Do This**



**Not This**



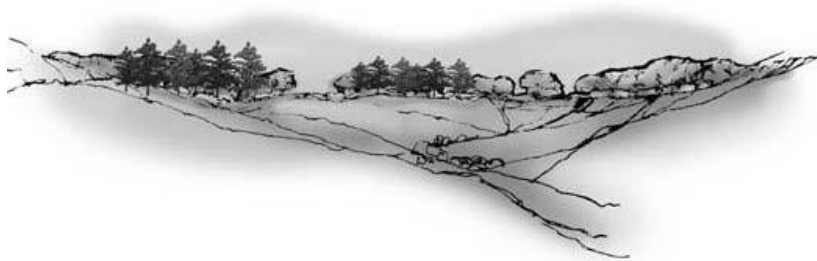
*Figure 5 – On left: Structure is setback to avoid alteration of natural drainage feature. On right: Structure is too close to natural drainage feature.*

d. Ridgelines, Skylines and View Corridors

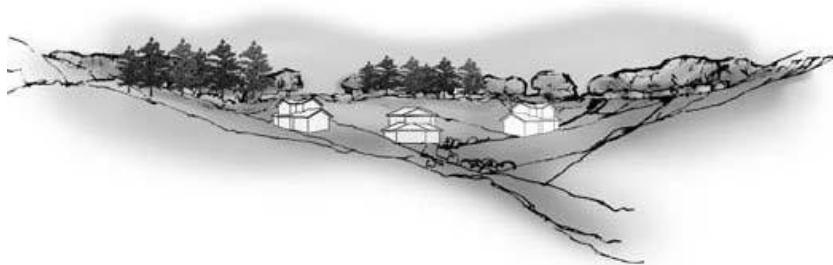
**Discussion:** The varied terrain of the Midcoast of hillside design review communities offers scenic views of both the ocean, in the case of the Midcoast, and the hills, that should be protected.

The County's General Plan and the LCP Visual Resources Component contains policies protecting ridgelines and skylines. As defined by LCP Policy 8.7, Ridgelines are the tops of hills or hillocks normally viewed against a background of other hills. A skyline is the line where sky and land masses meet. The Cabrillo Highway Scenic Corridor offers perhaps the most significant public views in the Midcoast; however, other public views should be considered as well. Both private and public views should be considered. A public view is a range of vision from a public road or other public facility, such as the significant public views in the Midcoast from the Cabrillo Highway Scenic Corridor (see Planning GIS Map). It is important to note that, for areas in the Coastal Zone, the LCP may require the maximum building height for structures located on a ridgeline or skyline to be lower than the maximum allowed by the Zoning Regulations.

**Existing**



**Do This**



### Not This



Figure 6 - In middle: Structures blend with existing landforms and vegetation. On bottom: Ridgeline silhouette has been destroyed through the removal of vegetative masses and natural landforms.

#### e. Relationship to Open Spaces

**Discussion:** In some areas of Montara in the Midcoast, the neighborhood's proximity to designated open space is one of the factors which defines the neighborhood character, and special attention should be paid to those transition or buffer areas where residential and open space land uses meet.

#### 2. Complement Other Structures in the Neighborhood

Most home building ~~in the Midcoast~~ takes place on "infill" lots - vacant parcels next to developed lots with existing homes. As such, careful attention must be paid to the placement, orientation and design of new homes and additions to ensure that they are complementary to other homes in the neighborhood.

#### a. Privacy

**Discussion:** Privacy is one of the keys to a property owner's enjoyment of their property and their quality of life. The placement of a new home or an addition, and/or the location of windows on a new home or an addition, can have a significant impact on privacy, both for the neighbors and for the occupants of the new home. Decks and balconies can provide outdoor living space and add architectural interest to a home. However, they must be carefully designed to avoid substantially affecting neighbors' privacy. It is particularly important to consider the impact the placement of a new structure ~~and/or~~, exterior lighting, and/or outdoor deck and patio areas may have on privacy when setbacks are the minimum allowed by the Zoning Regulations. This may involve modifying a proposed floor plan or proposing other architectural solutions or landscaping to enhance privacy. To reduce the potential for future privacy conflicts, a project designer should also consider the probable location and intensity of

development that is likely to occur on parcels in the vicinity of the proposed project.

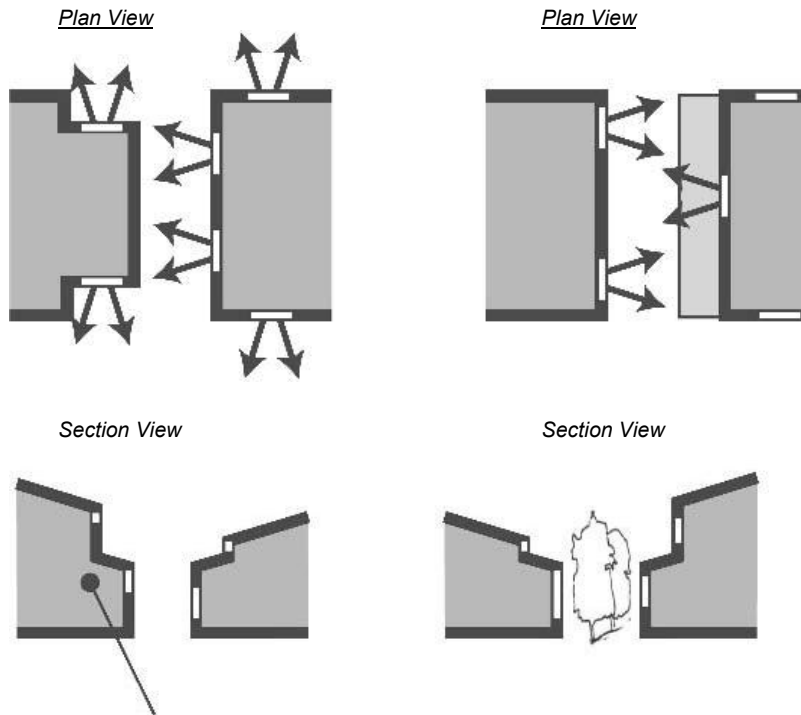


Figure 7 - On top: Windows are arranged and offset from neighbors to maximize privacy. On bottom: High windows and clerestory windows allow light inside with minimal privacy impacts. Landscaping or obscure glass can also reduce privacy impacts. Note: When using landscaping to create privacy also consider the potential view impacts that could occur from mature trees.

b. Views

**Discussion:** Homes in the hillside areas of the Midcoast enjoy a variety of views. Some are views of the ocean, others are of the hills, and others are vistas through the neighborhood. Views add value and enjoyment to a property; however, private views are not protected by existing regulations. Due to the configuration and size of some parcels and their topography, there may be no way to build without affecting someone else's view. However, when designing a new home or an addition, an effort should be made to minimize the effect on views from neighboring houses. Possible methods to minimize view block- age include: locating living space where it would have less view impact, increasing the setback of second stories, lowering roof plate heights, and choosing roof forms that minimize mass. To reduce the potential for future view

conflicts, a project designer is encouraged to also consider the probable location and intensity of development that is likely to occur on parcels in the vicinity of the proposed project.

**Do this**



**Not This**



*Figure 8 – on left: second story stepped back from the front and sides minimizes view blockage from neighboring homes. On right: a More massive second-story creates greater view blockage.*

**SECTION 6565.20(D). E-D. ELEMENTS OF DESIGN.**

One of the greatest challenges of residential construction in the ~~Midcoast~~ is the building of a contemporary home that is compatible with surrounding, older homes of varying styles built during previous eras when the construction of smaller homes, and sometimes homes of lower quality, was more typical. The architectural elements of a house can affect its apparent mass, architectural character, and the visual quality of the neighborhood. Every effort should be made, by following these guidelines, to place new structures so that they blend with those existing nearby and to achieve a higher quality of design and construction.

Elements of design explored further in this section include: (1) building mass, shape, and scale; (2) architectural styles and facades; (3) roof design; and (4) exterior materials and colors.

1. **Building Mass, Shape and Scale**

The apparent mass of a building is determined by the actual size of the building, and whether or not the building shapes and facades are simple or broken into more varied forms. With regard to actual size, new homes and additions must meet the building floor area standard set by the Zoning Regulations. However, even a home that complies with this standard may appear massive or bulky, if the building shape and/or facade is too simple. Simple forms ~~often~~ may appear more massive and larger, while houses with more variety in their forms could appear less massive and often more interesting. Simple forms may be appropriate in a modernist architectural design. Likewise, long, blank walls may appear more massive than walls with spaces and corners that create shadows and architectural interest. Finally, a house should appear to be proportional, or in “scale,” with other buildings in the neighborhood. The following standards encourage building designs

that reduce apparent mass and increase compatibility with the neighborhood.

a. Relationship to Existing Topography

**Discussion:** Many existing lots in the Midcoast are on steep slopes, and in many cases, the topography of a site is its key natural characteristic. New homes and major additions should be designed so that the structure will follow the existing contours of the land. A building's appearance of bulk can be reduced by shaping the building forms so that they harmonize rather than contrast with the existing topography.

While projects proposing the use of either manufactured homes or stock building plans are not prohibited, such projects may encounter difficulty in conforming to the existing topography and to other design standards.

~~Applicants for such projects should be prepared to the standards of this section.~~

**Do this**



**Not This**



*Figure 9 - Building forms step down with the existing grade and there is no unused under-floor space*

b. Neighborhood Scale

**Discussion:** "Scale" refers to a relative level or degree, or a proportion or relationship between two things. Neighborhood scale refers to the appearance of a home in relation to other homes in the neighborhood; is it properly related in size, height or other characteristics (shape, level of detail or articulation, etc.) to other homes in the neighborhood? Or is it out of proportion to other homes? As mentioned previously, whether or not a house appears proportional to adjacent homes is determined by the size and height of the house and whether or not the building shapes and facades are simple or broken into more varied forms. For example, large homes generally look less massive if they have more varied, rather than simple building forms. As such, even homes of different sizes can be in scale with one another if they share other architectural characteristics including building shape, simplicity or complexity of building form, and architectural styles and details. Where adjacent homes are not built to conform to these design standards

(e.g., they have little articulation and appear out of proportion, boxy or massive), project designers are encouraged to avoid repeating such mistakes in an effort to be in scale with the neighborhood.

**Do This**



**Not This**

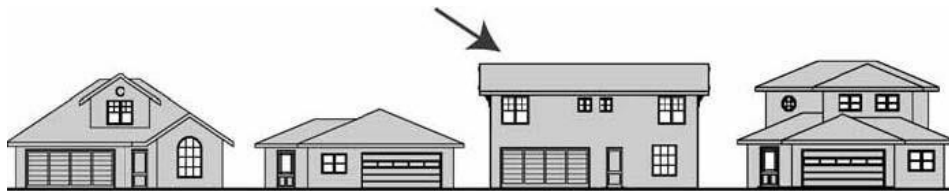


Figure 10 - On top: This house appears out of scale because its form is too simple. On bottom: The revised design become compatible with its neighbors by stepping back the second story and providing variation in the roof and building forms.

c. **Second Stories**

Most homes built today are two-story homes, and a common way to increase the size of existing homes is to add a second story. This presents a challenge, when the parcel being built on is surrounded primarily by one-story homes, or where a new two-story home or second-story addition has the potential to impact the privacy and views of existing homes. The following sections describe how two-story homes and second-story additions can be designed to be compatible with, and have minimal impact on, existing homes.

(1) **Second-Story Location**

**Discussion:** Since a second-story over a portion of a house will visually emphasize that area of the home, placing the second-story over just one portion of the home can make it appear unbalanced. Placing the second story over the entire first story can make the home appear boxy. Locating the second story toward the center of the first story and away from property lines results in a more balanced, less boxy appearance and increases light into neighboring properties.



Figure 11 - These second stories held toward the center of the property allow greater sunlight into neighboring properties and help protect view and privacy.

**Do This**



**Not This**



**Not This**

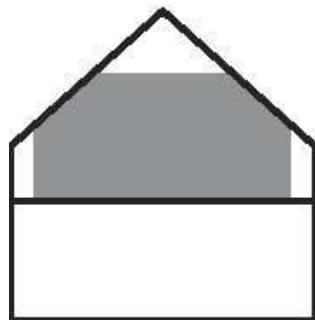


Figure 12 – On left: This second story addition centered over the lower floor away from property lines appears less boxy

(2) Lowering the Eave Line

**Discussion:** One way to make a two-story home more compatible with its single-story neighbors is to lower the eave line of the second-story roof. Lowering the eave line also ties the two stories of a house together. Setting second-stories back into the area of rooflines is often a solution for meeting Daylight Plane requirements, and it generally will lower the apparent height of the home. Lowering the eave line of the second-story roof can also reduce the apparent building mass, which may result in the scale of the building being more compatible with its neighborhood.

**Do This**



**Not This**

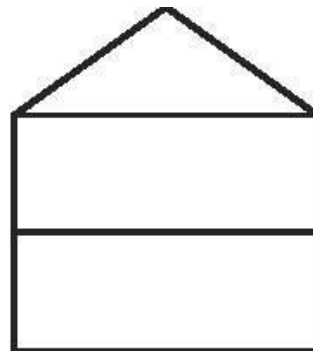


Figure 13 - On left: Second floor rooms in attic space allow; On right: Full height second story results in tall walls and a more massive appearance to the move.

**Do This**

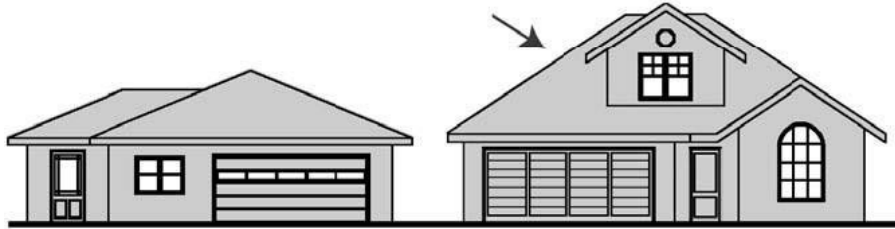


Figure 14 - Second floor stepped back from property line and held within the roofline of the main portion of the home.

**Not This**

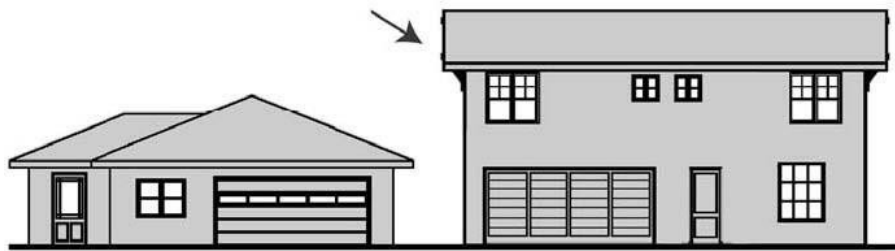


Figure 15 - Avoid creating tall two story exterior walls that are less compatible with single story neighbors.

d. **Daylight Plane/Facade Articulation**

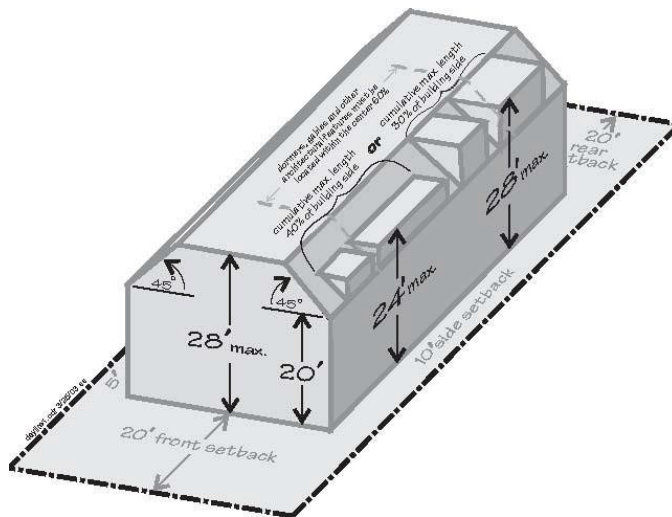


Figure 16

**Discussion:** The Daylight Plane/Facade Articulation requirements contained in the County Zoning Regulations are included below as a starting point for designing a two-story home or a second story addition. For more detail regarding facade articulation, please refer to Section 2, Architectural Styles and Facades.

Cornices, canopies, eaves, roof overhangs, chimneys, fire escapes, stairways; landing places; uncovered porches, and similar architectural features may extend into the daylight plane at the front, side, or rear yard, to the extent allowed by Zoning Regulations Chapter 8.340 (Section 6406).

Chimneys, pipes, mechanical equipment, antennae, and similar equipment may extend into the daylight plane up to a maximum of 36 feet as required for safety or efficient operation.

Dormers, gables and other architectural features located in the center 60% of the house may extend into the angled portion of the daylight plane, ~~subject to Design Review Committee approval~~, provided that:

- (1) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 40% of the length of that total building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 24 feet.
- (2) The combined length on any building side does not exceed 30% of the length of that building side, and the height of such features does not exceed 28 feet.

i. ~~Facade Articulation Option – Facade articulation shall be provided on all building sides, and is subject to approval by the Design Review Committee. Facade articulation is intended to break up the appearance of shear walls through the placement of projecting or recessing architectural details, including decks, bays, windows, balconies, porches, overhangs, and cantilevered features.~~

ii. ~~In order to approve proposed facade articulation, the Design Review Committee must find that: (a) all building facades are well articulated and proportioned, and (b) each building wall is broken up so as not to appear shear, blank, looming or massive to neighboring properties.~~

e. Wall and Facade Articulation

**Discussion:** Building wall gaps that articulate the walls of the house create shadows and contribute to the architectural character of the home. These changes to the form of a building can have a great effect on the apparent building mass. Longer flat walls generally appear more massive and less interesting. Adding steps and breaks to long or tall walls will reduce apparent mass and add visual interest. Likewise, changes in building materials or colors and ~~appropriate~~ architectural

details can help break up long or tall walls and keep a house from appearing massive or boxy.

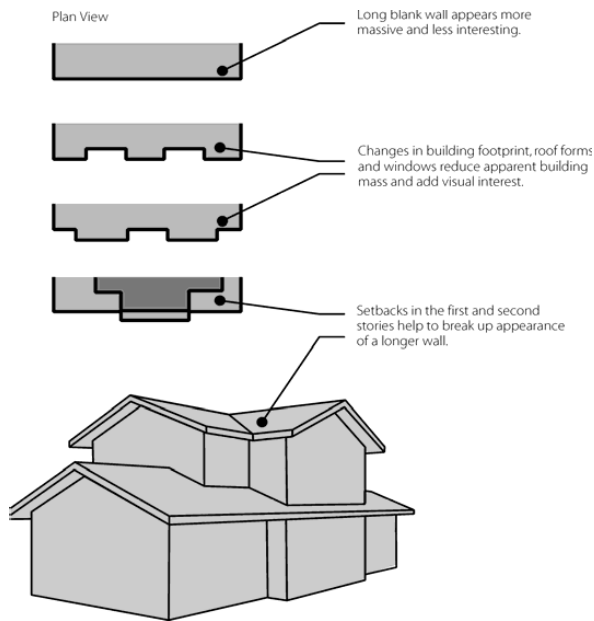


Figure 17

## 2. Architectural Styles and Features

Many architectural features can affect whether or not a house appears to be compatible with its neighborhood, including building bulk and height, which are discussed in the previous sections. Other important elements in defining compatibility include architectural style and architectural details, such as window, door, and garage patterns and types.

### a. Architectural Style

**Discussion:** When designing a new home or an addition, architectural style should be evaluated by considering what building elements define the architectural style of the house (e.g., building shape, roof design, exterior materials, window size and type, etc.), what defining elements are common to other houses in the neighborhood, and what elements characterize the natural setting (e.g., vegetation, landforms, etc.).

There are many different architectural styles present throughout the [Emerald Lake Hills, Devonshire, Palomar Park, Midcoast, and other communities within Design Review Areas](#). In some neighborhoods, the architectural style is more defined than in others and on some houses it is more apparent than on others. Designing a home and choosing a style that is complementary to adjacent homes

can be challenging when the homes are of many different styles, have no defined architectural style or do not conform to these Design Standards (e.g., they have architectural details that are inconsistent or out of proportion for the style). In that case, a project designer should strive for a style that at least is not jarring or disruptive in appearance when compared to adjacent homes, and foster compatibility through other elements of design such as similar building shapes, exterior materials or colors, window/door styles, and roof massing and design. In the Midcoast, while no particular architectural style is prohibited, a style that reflects the Midcoast's coastal, semi-rural, diverse, small-town character (e.g., coastal craftsman) will more readily be found to be complementary to the neighborhood. Finally, consideration should also be given to the natural setting, and a complementary style chosen depending on whether the site is, for example, steeply sloped, heavily wooded, or more open in character.

b. Openings

**Discussion:** Windows and doors are often the most visually distinctive features on a house. They are a link between private and public space and can provide a sense of security for both. They also can establish an architectural rhythm and affect the apparent mass of the house. There may be a proportion to the openings - vertical or horizontal - that is common to the house or the neighborhood. Dominant window/door materials or style - such as an arched shape or divided windows - should also be considered.

**Do This**



**Not This**



*Figure 18 – On left: Style and materials of new second-story windows match and appear compatible with the original first-story of the house. On right: These new second-story windows are of different shape and proportions and material (metal vs. original wood)*

c. Entries

**Discussion:** Front walkways, front doors and windows, and front porches that face the street make for safer neighborhoods by keeping “eyes on the street” and create a human-scaled appearance to a building. The design and prominence of entries in the neighborhood should also be considered.

**Do This**



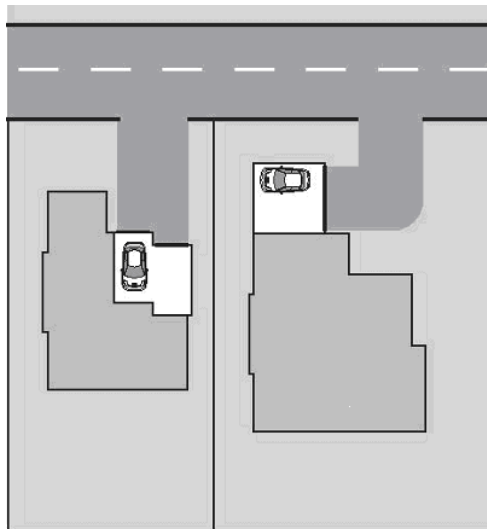
**Not This**



*Figure 19 – on left: Scale of entry is compatible with other features of the house. On right: Entry is out of scale and has a commercial appearance.*

d. **Garages and Carports**

**Discussion:** The location, size, position and appearance of a garage can have a great effect on the appearance of a home and should be designed with care. While in most cases it is preferable to emphasize the front entrance of a home, rather than the garage, a prominent garage may be unavoidable, particularly on steeply sloping lots. In some neighborhoods, there may be an established pattern in the size, position or appearance of garages. Examples of patterns that meet the design standards are garages with single rather than double garage doors, or garages facing away from or set back from the street. If there is no established pattern, greater flexibility in design and appearance of garages should be considered.



*Figure - 20 Plan View; Garages appear less prominent when facing away from or set back from the street.*



Figure 21 - When a prominent garage is unavoidable, choose decorative garage doors that are consistent with the home's architectural style.

### 3. Roof Design

Roof shape and type can be the most obvious elements in defining the appearance of a house and a neighborhood. When designing a new home or an addition, it is important to consider the massing of roof forms and neighborhood roof patterns and compatibility.

#### a. Massing and Design of Roof Forms

**Discussion:** The mass of a roof and how it is articulated into different shapes contributes to the character of a house. Most houses with sloped roofs, and many with flat roofs, have a primary roof form and smaller secondary and minor forms that contribute to the overall style of the house. Evaluate the massing of the roof form and determine how it will benefit the appearance of the house and be compatible with the neighborhood.

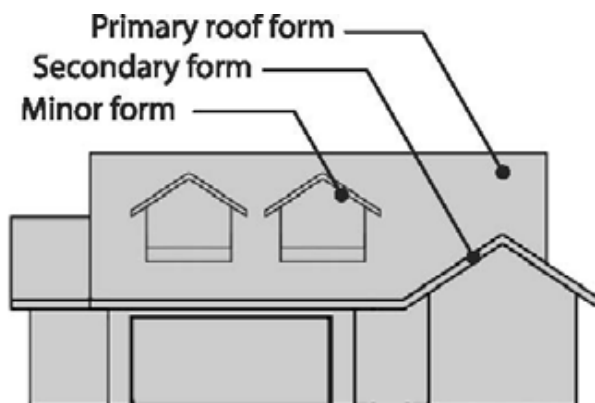


Figure 22 - Roof Form Hierarchy



Figure 23 - These two-story houses all display roof forms compatible with their architectural style and compatible with neighboring roof forms.

b. Design Compatibility

**Discussion:** Some neighborhoods have roof patterns that are distinctive and repeatable from home to home. Other neighborhoods have greater variety or less distinctive roof forms, and greater deviations from neighboring roof forms could appear acceptable. Roof patterns are created through the roof slope, materials and massing of roofs. Evaluate the pattern of roofs in the neighborhood.

4. Exterior Materials and Colors

**Discussion:** Exterior materials and colors should complement the style of the house and that of the neighborhood, and blend with surrounding natural features when viewed from a distance. These standards are not intended to interfere with individual initiative, but rather to encourage compatibility within neighborhoods and with the natural setting. When selecting materials and colors, consider the type and character of materials and colors, number of different materials and colors, the quality of materials, and how ornamentation is applied. While no building material or color is prohibited as a matter of policy, as with other design elements, the neighborhood context provides direction for the choice of materials and colors. Use of complementary materials and colors will help a house appear compatible with its neighbors and blend with its natural setting including surrounding vegetation and landforms. Darker rather than lighter exterior colors may be used to reduce the apparent mass of a home.



Figure 24 - The exterior materials and appropriate ornamentation of these houses complement the natural setting.

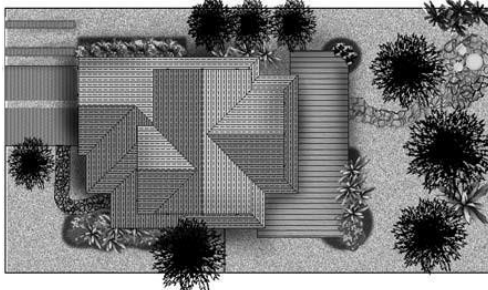
## **E5. LANDSCAPING, PAVED AREAS, AND FENCES, LIGHTING AND NOISE.**

While the appearance of new residential structures is of primary importance, ancillary development on a residential site can also have a significant visual impact, and should be designed carefully to complement a new or remodeled home and to prevent adverse impacts to neighboring properties. The following section provides guidance and standards for landscaping, paved areas, fencing, and lighting and noise.

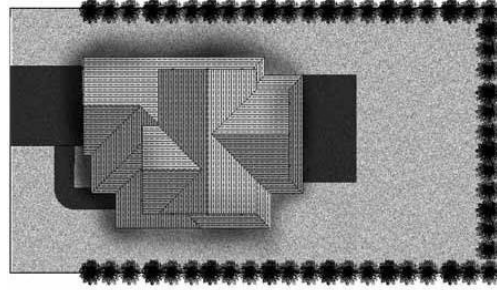
### 1. Landscaping

**Discussion:** Landscaping should complement and enhance the design of the home and overall site, while harmonizing with the overall landscape character of the neighborhood. New landscaping should also harmonize with existing trees and vegetation remaining on site. Landscaping should not be used in place of other more permanent architectural solutions, but should be used to accent or enhance architectural features. When developing a landscape plan, consideration should be given to water availability and the function of the landscaping - to provide shade or screening, or to protect privacy - and location and species should be selected accordingly. ~~For more detailed landscape plan requirements and specifications, please see the County's Minimum Standards for Landscape Plans.~~

#### **Do This**



#### **Not This**

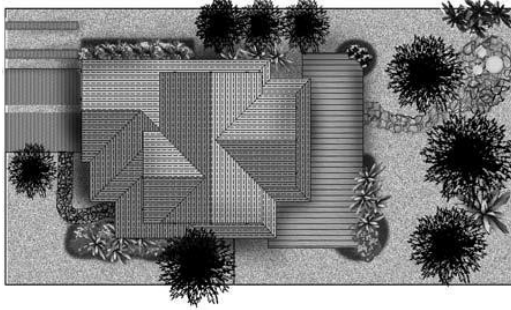


*Figure 25 - On left: New landscaping harmonizes with existing trees and natural character of the neighborhood. On right: Landscaping does not present a natural appearance. Allow linear patterns if presented within an overall modern design concept*

### 2. Paved Hardscape Areas

**Discussion:** Environmentally sensitive planning and design of ~~paved or~~ hardscape areas (e.g., paving, pavers, impervious/pervious concrete) on site will produce a more natural appearance and prevent stormwater pollution by reducing the volume of surface runoff, increasing infiltration, and preventing pollutants from entering the creeks and ocean. Please refer to the County's Drainage Manual ~~Stormwater Pollution Prevention program publications, available at the Planning Counter,~~ for further information and ~~innovative ideas~~ on this topic.

### Do This



### Not This

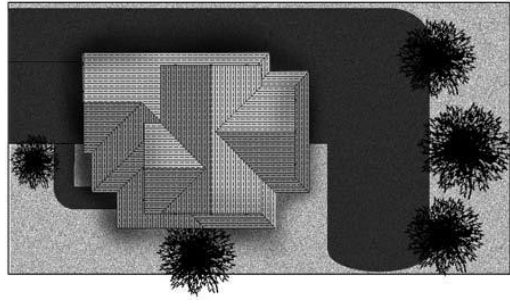


Figure 26 - On left: Amount of hardscape and size of driveways, walkways and parking areas minimized; alternatives to asphalt and concrete used. On right: Hardscape covers most of lot

## 3. Fencing

**Discussion:** Site fencing should complement and enhance the design of the home, while harmonizing with the overall character of the neighborhood. Fencing should be considered and designed as an integrated part of the project, not left as an afterthought when the project is completed. Fences and walls shall comply with the height limits specified in Chapter 8.332 (Section 6412) of the Zoning Regulations.



Figure 27 - Fence designs enhance the homes' architectural style.

## 4. Lighting

**Discussion:** The location and style of exterior and interior lighting chosen for a single-family home can have a significant impact on the home's design. Lighting standards are necessary in order to protect the night sky from unnecessary light pollution and to minimize impact to surrounding homes and the natural environment. It can also affect adjacent neighbors, or depending on topography, more distant views from scenic corridors. An appropriate lighting plan will complement the home's design and provide adequate light and security for the subject site. At the same time, the plan should prevent direct light and glare from extending in any direction, including upward, beyond the boundaries of the site. In general, low-level lighting directed toward the ground is preferred.

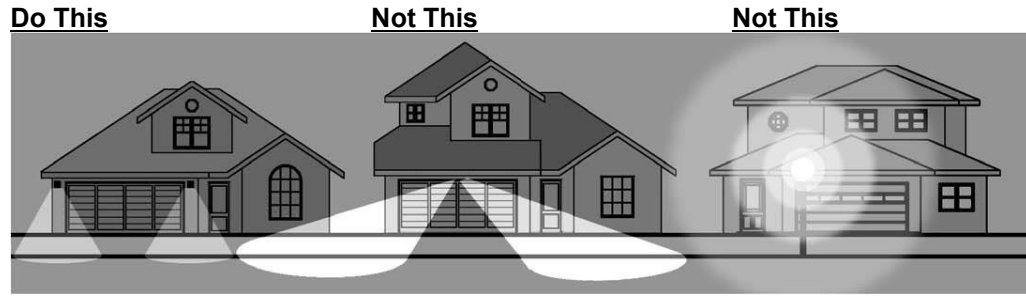


Figure 28 - On left: Low-level light is directed toward the ground. In middle: Lighting is high intensity and is not confined to the site. On right: Light and glare extend in all directions, including up.

**F. UTILITIES AND ANCILLARY STRUCTURES.** Utilities and ancillary structures are a necessary, but often unsightly, component of residential construction. Consideration should be given to minimizing the visual impact of such facilities. Property owners and project designers are encouraged to coordinate building, utility and ancillary structure placement at the start of a project, so that all zoning, environmental health and design standards can be met.

**SECTION 8.256.170 GENERAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS**

**SEE ATTACHMENT D3**

**SECTION 8.256.180 DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS APPLICATION TABLE**

**SEE ATTACHMENT D3**

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DRAFT

**8.256.150. STANDARDS FOR DESIGN IN EMERALD LAKE HILLS AND OAK KNOLL MANOR (AREAS ZONED RH/DR) AND DEVONSHIRE.** The following design standards shall apply within Emerald Lake Hills and Oak Knoll Manor (areas zoned RH/DR only) and within Devonshire.

A. Site Planning

As much as possible, site new buildings on a parcel in locations that:

- a. ~~Minimize tree removal;~~
- b. ~~Minimize alteration of the natural topography;~~
- c. ~~Respect the privacy of neighboring houses and outdoor living areas;~~
- d. ~~Minimize the blockage of sunlight on neighboring buildings; and~~
- e. ~~Minimize alteration of streams and natural drainage channels.~~

B. Architectural Styles

~~Design new buildings that are architecturally compatible with existing buildings by requiring them to reflect and emulate, as much as possible, the predominant architectural styles and the natural surroundings of the immediate area (e.g., bungalow, craftsman, ranch). Avoid revivalist historical styles.~~

C. Building Shapes and Bulk

~~Design buildings with shapes that respect and conform to the natural topography of the site by requiring them to step up or down hillsides in the same direction as the natural grade. Control the bulk of buildings on hillsides by requiring them to be terraced up or down the hill at a uniform height.~~

D. Unenclosed Spaces

~~As much as possible, avoid the creation of unattractive, useless space beneath buildings by prohibiting buildings that are predominantly built on stilts.~~

E. Facades

Design well-articulated and proportioned facades by:

- a. ~~Avoiding the dominance of garages at street level;~~
- b. ~~Considering the placement and appearance of garages and the width of garage doors;~~
- c. ~~Prohibiting massive blank walls by creating aesthetic and proportioned~~

patterns of windows and shadows; and

- d. — Relating the size, location, and scale of windows and doors to adjacent buildings.

#### F. — Roofs

Design buildings using primarily pitched roofs. Design buildings with roofs that reflect the predominant architectural styles of the immediate area.

#### G. — Materials and Colors

Make varying architectural styles compatible by using similar materials and colors which blend with the natural setting and the immediate area. Avoid the use of building materials and colors which are highly reflective and contrasting by requiring them to blend and harmonize with the natural woodland environment and vegetation of the area.

- a. — Use colors such as warm grays, beiges, natural woods, and muted greens. Prohibit the use of cool grays, blues, pinks, yellows, and white.
- b. — Encourage the use of building materials that are compatible with the predominant architectural styles of the immediate area. In areas where bungalow, craftsman, and ranch architectural styles are predominant, use real wood and stone building materials such as board and batten, wall shingles, fire-resistant roof shingles, flagstone, and rock. Avoid such materials as simulated stone and T-111 plywood. Ensure that all roof materials have Class "C" or better fire resistive ratings.

#### H. — Utilities

Install all new service lines underground.

#### I. — Signs

Control the use of signs so that their number, location, size, design, lighting, materials, and colors harmonize with their surroundings and are compatible with the architectural style of the building.

#### J. — Paved Areas

As much as possible, keep the amount of visible paved areas (e.g., driveways, walkways, etc.) to a minimum.

**8.256.160. STANDARDS FOR DESIGN IN PALOMAR PARK. The following design standards shall apply within Palomar Park.**

#### 1. — Site Planning

As much as possible, site new buildings on a parcel in locations that:

1. Minimize tree removal;
2. Minimize alteration of the natural topography;
3. Respect the privacy of neighboring houses and outdoor living areas;
4. Minimize the blockage of sunlight on neighboring buildings; and
5. Minimize alteration of streams and natural drainage channels.

#### 6. Architectural Styles

Design new buildings that are architecturally compatible with existing buildings by requiring them to reflect and emulate, as much as possible, the predominant architectural styles and the natural surroundings of the immediate area. Avoid revivalist historical styles.

1.

#### 2. Building Shapes and Bulk

Design buildings with shapes that respect and conform to the natural topography of the site by requiring them to step up or down hillsides in the same direction as the natural grade.

Control the bulk of buildings on hillsides by requiring them to be terraced up or down the hill at a uniform height.

#### 3. Unenclosed Spaces

As much as possible, avoid the creation of unattractive, useless space beneath buildings by prohibiting buildings that are predominantly built on stilts.

#### 4. Facades

Design well-articulated and proportioned facades by:

1. Avoiding the dominance of garages at street level;
2. Considering the placement and appearance of garages and the width of garage doors;
3. Prohibiting massive blank walls by creating aesthetic and proportioned patterns of windows and shadows; and
4. Relating the size, location, and scale of windows and doors to adjacent buildings.

## 5. Roofs

Design buildings using primarily pitched roofs. Design buildings with roofs that reflect the predominant architectural styles of the immediate area.

## 6. Materials and Colors

Make varying architectural styles compatible by using similar materials and colors which blend with the natural setting and the immediate area. Avoid the use of building materials and colors which are highly reflective and contrasting by requiring them to blend and harmonize with the natural woodland environment and vegetation of the area.

a. Use colors such as warm grays, beiges, natural woods, and muted greens.

b.

1. Encourage the use of building materials that are compatible with the predominant architectural styles of the immediate area. In areas where bungalow, craftsman, and ranch architectural styles are predominant, use real wood and stone building materials such as board and batten, wall shingles, fire resistant roof shingles, flagstone, and rock. Ensure that all roof materials have Class "C" or better fire resistive ratings.

## 7. Utilities

Install all new service lines underground.

## 8. Signs

Control the use of signs so that their number, location, size, design, lighting, materials, and colors harmonize with their surroundings and are compatible with the architectural style of the building.

## 9. Lighting

Exterior lighting should be subdued and indirect, and glaring fixtures should be avoided.

## 10. Retaining Walls

Retaining walls should be surfaced, painted, landscaped or otherwise treated to blend with their surroundings.

## 11. Paved Areas

As much as possible, keep the amount of visible paved areas (e.g., driveways, walkways, etc.) to a minimum.

**8.256.170. STANDARDS FOR DESIGN IN OTHER AREAS.** The following design standards shall apply in other areas zoned Design Review.

- A. ~~Proposed structures are designed and situated so as to retain and blend with the natural vegetation and landforms of the site and to ensure adequate space for light and air to itself and adjacent properties.~~
- B. ~~Where grading is necessary for the construction of structures and paved areas, it blends with adjacent landforms through the use of contour grading rather than harsh cutting or terracing of the site and does not create problems of drainage or erosion on its site or adjacent property.~~
- C. ~~Streams and other natural drainage systems are not altered so as to affect their character and thereby causing problems of drainage, erosion or flooding.~~
- D. ~~Structures are located outside flood zones, drainage channels and other areas subject to inundation.~~
- E. ~~Trees and other vegetative land cover are removed only where necessary for the construction of structures or paved areas in order to reduce erosion and impacts on natural drainage channels, and maintain surface runoff at acceptable levels.~~
- F. ~~A smooth transition is maintained between development and adjacent open areas through the use of natural landscaping and plant materials which are native or appropriate to the area.~~
- G. ~~Views are protected by the height and location of structures and through the selective pruning or removal of trees and vegetative matter at the end of view corridors.~~
- H. ~~Construction on ridgelines blends with the existing silhouette by maintaining natural vegetative masses and landforms and does not extend above the height of the forest or tree canopy.~~
- I. ~~Structures are set back from the edge of bluffs and cliffs to protect views from scenic areas below.~~
- J. ~~Public views to and along the shoreline from public roads and other public lands are protected."and~~
- A. ~~Varying architectural styles are made compatible through the use of similar materials and colors which blend with the natural setting and surrounding neighborhoods.~~
- K. ~~The design of the structure is appropriate to the use of the property and is in harmony with the shape, size and scale of adjacent building in the community.~~
- B. ~~Overhead utility lines are placed underground where appropriate to reduce the visual impact in open and scenic areas.~~

- ~~L. The number, location, size, design, lighting, materials, and use of colors in signs are compatible with the architectural style of the structure they identify and harmonize with their surroundings.~~
- ~~M. Paved areas are integrated into the site, relate to their structure, and are landscaped to reduce visual impact from residential areas and from roadways.~~

### **8.256.190. STANDARDS FOR DESIGN IN PLANNED COLMA DISTRICT.**

The following design standards shall apply to all land designated High Density Residential, Medium High Density Residential and Neighborhood Commercial (Residential Above) within the Planned Colma (PC) Zoning District (with the exception of emergency shelters, which are exempt from discretionary design review in the High Density and Medium High Density Residential areas):

#### **A. Relationship to BART Station Area Specific Plan**

The provisions of this section implement the BART Station Area Specific Plan. The BART Station Area Specific Plan provides further guidance in complying with the requirements of this section. The Specific Plan shall be used in conjunction with this section to design and evaluate development proposals.

#### **B. Definitions for PC Colma**

For the purposes of this subsection, the following terms are defined:

Courtyard Apartment Building. A multiple-story building containing multiple-family dwellings with shared entrances off a central courtyard.

Duplex. A building containing two-family dwellings with individual entrances.

Flat. A multiple-story building containing two-family or multiple-family dwellings with each dwelling on a separate floor.

Kiss-N-Ride Area. Designated curbside areas for passenger drop-off and pick-up.

Podium Apartment Building. A multiple-story building containing multiple-family dwellings with shared entrances over subsurface or ground floor parking.

Single-Family Home. A building containing a one-family dwelling.

Single-Loaded Apartment. Apartment unit configured to run the entire depth of a building from front to back.

Single-Story Commercial Building. A building containing commercial uses within one story.

Small Apartment Building. A multiple-story building containing multiple-family dwellings with shared entrances.

Townhouse. A multiple-story building containing one-family dwellings with each unit side-by-side and individual entrances.

## C. General Residential Design Guidelines

The following guidelines shall apply to all building types.

### 1. Building Orientation

Require:

- a. Building entrances on streets, pedestrian ways, kiss-n-ride areas, central courtyards and parks and plazas rather than the interior of blocks or parking lots.
- b. Buildings to be placed along the frontage of the BART bus turnaround and kiss-n-ride area.

Encourage: Single-loaded apartments along the BART bus turnaround with service areas facing the BART area and active spaces facing an interior courtyard.

Prohibit: Street-facing facades consisting of a blank wall or an unbroken series of garage doors, or lined with off-street uncovered parking spaces.

### 2. Building Form

Require:

- a. Buildings to follow the natural topography by terracing up slopes.
- b. Variations in floor level, facades, roof patterns, architectural details, and finishes of large buildings to create the appearance of several smaller buildings.

Encourage:

- a. Unobstructed views along east-west street corridors, from the Planned Colma (PC) District to San Bruno Mountain and from surrounding areas to the area.
- b. Vertical, rather than horizontal, building forms.

### 3. Facades

Encourage:

- a. Grand entries, such as porches.
- b. Corner entries.
- c. Landmark features, such as towers, at corners of large buildings.
- d. Porches, patios, bays, solariums, and balconies.
- e. Vertical, rather than square or horizontal, windows.
- f. Casement or divided windows with individual panes of glass.
- g. High quality wooden windows and door frames.
- h. Windows and doors to be recessed one to three inches from the front facade.

Prohibit: Exterior stairs to upper floor units on street facing facades and the front half of side facades.

#### 4. Roofs

Require: Mechanical equipment to be screened with parapets or the roof form.

Encourage:

- a. Roofs that are integral to the structure of the building and the design of the facade, rather than ornamental.
- b. Gable roofs.

Prohibit:

- a. Mansard roofs.
- b. Buildings covered entirely by a flat roof.

#### 5. Materials

Encourage:

- a. Identical building materials on all sides of a building.
- b. Smooth-finish stucco.
- c. Horizontal wood siding.

- d. Light tints and bright accents, rather than earth tones.

Prohibit: Walls entirely of glass, reflective glass, textured stucco, and scored plywood.

## 6. Walls, Fences and Landscaping

Require: Trees to be planted every 30 feet in the setback along the frontage of the BART bus turnaround and kiss-n-ride area.

Encourage:

- a. Low walls or fences of light-colored stucco, concrete, masonry, or wood along front property lines.
- b. Low hedges along front property lines.

## D. Specific Residential Design Guidelines

In addition to the General Design Guidelines, the following guidelines shall apply to specific residential building types.

### 1. Podium Apartments

Require:

- a. Street entries placed every 50 to 60 feet.
- b. Porches, patios, bays, solariums, and balconies overlooking streets to be placed every 25 to 30 feet.
- c. Where necessary, second floor residential bays to be placed a minimum of 3 feet above retail awnings.
- d. A minimum 20-foot by 20-foot open courtyard area on the podium above parking.
- e. A tree survey for development in the eucalyptus grove north of D Street and east of the Colma BART Station.

Encourage:

- a. One entrance to serve no more than 16 units.
- b. Courtyards to contain shared facilities and paths, surrounded by porches, patios, and entry porticos.
- c. Courtyard landscaping to provide both common and private open space.
- d. Steps to connect courtyards to the street.

- e. Ground-level open space where possible.
- f. Roof decks integrated into overall building design, with wind screens and landscaping.
- g. Preservation of existing eucalyptus trees.
- h. Openings between parking levels and podium courtyards for sunlight and ventilation.

## 2. Podium Apartments, Small Apartment Buildings and Courtyard Apartments

Encourage:

- a. Porches, patios, solariums, and balconies to be a minimum of 6 feet deep and 50 square feet in size.
- b. Porches and patios to be accessible directly from the street or courtyard.
- c. Second floor residential bays to be placed a minimum of 3 feet above retail awnings.

Prohibit: Open railings on balconies.

## 3. Small Apartment Buildings and Courtyard Apartments

Require:

- a. Street entries placed every 25 to 30 feet.
- b. A minimum 20-foot by 20-foot open space area as a combination parking and open space area.

Encourage:

- a. One entrance to serve no more than 16 units.
- b. Pavement patterns and material to emphasize the combined pedestrian and auto use of parking and open space areas.
- c. Hard-surface playgrounds in parking and open space areas.

## 4. Duplexes, Flats and Townhouses

Require: Street entries placed every 25 to 30 feet.

Encourage:

- a. One entrance for every one to two units.
- b. Street-facing porches.
- c. Porches to be a minimum of 6 feet deep and 50 square feet in size.
- d. Porch support columns and roofs to appear integral to the structure of the building and the design of the facade, rather than ornamental.

E. Commercial Design Guidelines

The following guidelines shall apply to all commercial uses.

1. Building Orientation

Require: Buildings to face streets, pedestrian ways, kiss-n-ride areas, and parks and plazas rather than the interior of blocks or parking lots.

Encourage: Benches and small tables along ground floor retail frontages outside the public right-of-way.

Prohibit: Street-facing facades to consist of a blank wall.

2. Building Form

Require: Variations in floor level, facades, roof patterns, architectural details, and finishes of large buildings to create the appearance of several smaller buildings.

Encourage:

- a. Unobstructed views along east-west street corridors, from the Planned Colma (PC) District to San Bruno Mountain and from surrounding areas to the area.
- b. Vertical, rather than horizontal, building forms.

3. Facades

Require:

- a. Storefront floor to ceiling height of 12 feet.
- b. Street entries to ground floor retail shops placed every 25 to 30 feet.
- c. The design of residential entries to be clearly distinct from retail entries.

- d. Display windows of clear glass.
- e. Display windows to begin no higher than 30 inches above finished sidewalk grade.
- f. No more than 6 feet of blank, non-window, wall space in every 25 feet of storefront.

Encourage:

- a. Corner entries.
- b. Separate awnings for each shop, hanging 9 to 12 feet above the sidewalk.
- c. Columns or other vertical definition placed at least every 25 to 30 feet, alternating with entries.
- d. Storefront entries to be accented by 3- to 4-foot recesses for door swing space and associated display bays.

#### 4. Roofs

Require: Mechanical equipment to be screened with parapets or the roof form.

Encourage:

- a. Roofs that are integral to the structure of the building and the design of the facade, rather than ornamental.
- b. Gable roofs.

Prohibit:

- a. Mansard roofs.
- b. Buildings covered entirely by a flat roof.

#### 5. Materials

Encourage:

- a. Identical building materials on all sides of a building.
- b. Light tints and bright accents, rather than earth tones.

Prohibit: Glass curtain walls, reflective glass, textured stucco, and scored plywood.

This section shall be applied to any district which is combined with the “DR” District, except that in PC Colma, the definitions found in Section 8.256.190 shall supercede any conflicting definition(s) in this section.

1. **Arch** – A curved structural member typically spanning an opening such as a door, window or arcade.
2. **Ancillary** – Subordinate.
3. **Attic** – The area formed between the ceiling joists and rafters.
4. **Balcony** – A platform or deck projecting from the wall of a building above ground level, usually enclosed by a railing.
5. **Basement** – A level of a structure that is built either entirely below grade level (full basement) or partially below grade (daylight basement).
6. **Bench Mark** – A reference point used by surveyors to establish grades and construction heights.
7. **Breezeway** – A covered walkway with open sides between two different parts of a structure.
8. **Cantilever** – Projected construction, a structural member or beam that is supported at only one end.
9. **Compatible** – Capable of existing together in harmony.
10. **Complementary** – Producing effects in concert different from those produced separately; completing.
11. **Corbel** – A projection from a wall, sometimes supporting a load and sometimes for decorative effect.
12. **Cornice** – The exterior detail at the meeting of a wall and a roof overhang; a decorative molding at the intersection of a wall and a ceiling.
13. **Crawl Space** – The area between the floor joists and the ground, usually a space that is not tall enough to stand in; also referred to as under-floor area.
14. **Dormer** – A structure protruding through the plane of a sloping roof, usually with a window and its own smaller roof.
15. **Entry** – The ingress/egress features and associated decorative elements that frame the main entrance area of a residence, including front door(s), roof(s), porch, stairs, lighting, and ornamentation/architectural elements (such as columns).

16. **Easement** – An area of land, usually deed restricted, that in most cases cannot be built upon because it provides access to a structure or to utilities such as power, water, or sewer lines.
17. **Eave** – The part of the roof that overhangs or projects from the wall of a building.
18. **Elevation** – A drawing that views a building from any of its sides; a vertical height above a reference point such as above sea level.
19. **Excavation** – The mechanical removal of earth material ~~(County Ordinance Code Section 8601.24)~~.
20. **Façade** – The face or front of a building.
21. **Fill** – A deposit of earth or waste material placed by artificial means ~~(County Ordinance Code Section 8601.25)~~.
22. **Floor Plan** – A drawing that shows the layout of a building, including the size, dimensions, and arrangement of the rooms.
23. **French Door** – Two doors, composed of small panes of glass set within rectangularly arrayed muntins, mounted within the two individual frames. Usually such doors open onto an outside terrace or porch.
24. **Grade** – The vertical location of the ground surface ~~(County Ordinance Code Section 8601.27)~~.
- a. **Existing Grade** – The grade prior to or at the time of house construction/ enlargement, providing that any prior grading on the site was approved by the County or occurred before 1960 when the County began regulating grading activities.
  - b. **Finished Grade** – The final grade of the site that conforms to the approved plan ~~(County Ordinance Code Section 8601.29)~~.
25. **Grading** – Any excavating, filling or placement of earth materials or combination thereof ~~(County Ordinance Code Section 8601.31)~~.
26. **Half-Timber** – A frame construction method where spaces between wood members are filled with masonry.
27. **Hardscape** – Includes any hard surface, including permeable or impermeable surfaces, including but not limited to asphalt, concrete, pavers, and decomposed granite.
28. **Mullion** – A horizontal or vertical divider between sections of a window.

29. **Neighborhood** – The area surrounding a project site ~~existing or proposed home as described in Section 6565.20(B).~~
30. **Neighborhood Character** – The combination of qualities or features within a neighborhood that distinguishes it from other neighborhoods ~~(see Section 6565.20(B)).~~
31. **Obscure Glass** – Glass that is not transparent.
32. **Ornamentation** – That which decorates or adorns; embellishment.
33. **Parapet** – A portion of wall that extends above the edge of the roof.
34. **Perspective** – A type of drawing that gives a 3D view of a building or space using specific viewpoints and vanishing points.
35. **Pitch** – The slope of a roof or other plane, often expressed as inches of rise per foot of run, minimum 1:12 slope.
36. **Private View** – A range of vision from private property.
37. **Public View** – A range of vision from a public road or other public facility (see General Plan Policy 4.10).
38. **Rafters** – The sloping roof-frame members, typically wooden, that extend from the ridge to the eaves and establish the pitch of the roof. In Craftsman and Bungalow style buildings, the ends of these, called “rafter tails,” are often left exposed rather than boxed in by a soffit.
39. **Ridgeline** – The tops of hills or hillocks normally viewed against a background of other hills (see LCP Policy 8.7).
40. **Rendering** – An artistic process applied to drawings to add realism.
41. **Rooftop Deck** – A platform incorporated into or forming the roof of a lower story, typically accessed from within an upper story.
42. **Roof Styles:**
- a. **Flat** – A roof with a minimal roof pitch, usually about 1/8” per 12”.
  - b. **Gable** – A type of roof with two sloping surfaces that intersect at the ridge of the structure.
  - c. **Gambrel** – A type of roof formed with two planes on each side. The lower pitch is steeper than the upper portion of the roof.

- d. **Hip** – A roof shape with four sloping sides that intersect to form a pyramidal or elongated pyramidal shape.
  - e. **Mansard** – A four-sided, steep-sloped roof.
  - f. **Shed** – A roof with a single pitch.
43. **Sash** – Window framework that may be fixed or moveable.
44. **Scale** – A relative level or degree, or a proportion or relation between two things (~~see Section 6565.20(D)~~). Also, an instrument bearing ordered marks at fixed intervals used as a reference standard on measurement.
45. **Section (Cross Section)** – A type of drawing that cuts vertically through a building to show the interior and construction of a building.
46. **Sensitive Habitat** – (See LCP Policy 7.1.)
47. **Siding** – The narrow horizontal or vertical wooden boards that form the outer face of the walls in a traditional wood-frame building. Horizontal wooden siding types include shiplap and clapboard/weatherboard, while board-and-batten is the primary type of vertical siding. Shingles, whether of wood or composite material, are another siding type.
48. **Skyline** – The line where sky and land masses meet (see LCP Policy 8.7).
49. **Site Plan** – A drawing that shows the layout of a site including the topography, vegetation, surface water, etc., on a site.
50. **Split-Level** – A house that has two levels, one about a half a level above or below the other.
51. **Story** – A space in a building between the surface of any floor including a basement floor and the surface of the floor or roof next above but not including any attic or under-floor area (~~Zoning Regulations Section 6102.73~~). Typically, a story is a major section of a house that sits directly above or below other floors, while a “floor level” may be at a greater or lower height than other floors, but does not sit directly above or below them.
52. **Stucco** – A material, usually composed of cement, sand, and lime, applied to exterior walls to form a hard, uniform covering that may be either smooth or textured.
53. **Trim** – A piece of material which finishes the edge of a surface or opening. It is usually made of a different material or color from the adjacent surface.

54. **Vaulted** – An inclined ceiling area.

55. **Veneer** – A thin outer covering or non-load bearing masonry face material.

56. **Window Types:**

- a. **Bay** – A rectangular, curved or polygonal window extending beyond the main wall of the building.
- b. **Casement** – A window that is hinged on the side and opens in or out.
- c. **Clerestory** – A window or group of windows which are placed above the normal window height.
- d. **Double Hung** – A type of window in which the upper and lower halves slide past each other to provide an opening at the top or bottom of the window.
- e. **Glider/Slider** – A window with two overlapping sashes that slide horizontally in tracks.
- f. **Fanlight** – A window, often semicircular, over a door, with radiating muntins suggesting a fan.
- g. **Louver(ed)** – A window with horizontal slats to allow for ventilation.
- h. **Transom** – Horizontal window opening above a door or another window.

**SECTION 6565.20(H). SECOND UNITS.** ~~The development of second dwelling units in single-family residential neighborhoods is an efficient and effective way to increase affordable rental housing options. However, it is important that second units be designed and constructed to be compatible with surrounding homes, and so that they do not detract from the single-family character of the area.~~

**Standards:** ~~The following design standards shall apply in addition to the design standards in this section (6565.20) and the standards for second dwelling units contained in Chapter 22.5 of the County Zoning Regulations:~~

- a. ~~Required parking spaces for second dwelling units shall be in a location that can conveniently be used by occupants of the unit and to avoid a “parking lot” appearance.~~
- b. ~~Due to the increased density, second units shall be designed to avoid substantially affecting the privacy of neighboring properties. The privacy standards contained in Section 6565.20(C) shall also apply to second units.~~

**SECTION 6565.21. STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF TREES AND VEGE-**

**TATION.** ~~The following standards shall apply in all areas zoned DR. In Emerald Lake Hills, Oak Knoll Manor, Palomar Park and Devonshire, the following standards shall apply to trees 6 inches or more in diameter or 19 inches or more in circumference (measured at 4 1/2 feet above the ground), while in all other areas the following standards shall apply to trees 12 inches or more in diameter or 38 inches or more in circumference (measured at 4 1/2 feet above ground).~~

A. ~~Prohibit the removal of a tree unless:~~

- ~~1. There is no alternative building site for a house, driveway, or accessory structure, or~~
- ~~2. Except for any property in the Coastal Zone, tree removal is necessary: (a) to utilize the property in a manner which is of greater public value than any environmental degradation caused by the action, or (b) to allow reasonable economic or other enjoyment of the property, or~~
- ~~3. A tree: (a) is diseased, (b) could adversely affect the general health and safety, (c) could cause substantial damage, (d) is a public nuisance, (e) is in danger of falling, (f) is too closely located to existing or proposed structures, (g) acts as a host for a plant which is parasitic to another species of tree which is in danger of being infested or exterminated by the parasite, or (h) is a substantial fire hazard.~~

~~The Planning Director or other reviewing body for the project shall have the authority to request a written report substantiating the removal of any tree in accordance with this subparagraph.~~

B. ~~The replacement of lost trees when required shall be in a manner prescribed by the Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator, as is applicable, but shall not exceed the following specifications:~~

- ~~1. For each loss of a significant indigenous tree, there shall be a replacement with three (3) or more trees of the same species using at least five (5) gallon size stock.~~
- ~~2. For each loss of a significant exotic tree, there shall be a replacement with three (3) or more trees from a list maintained by the Planning Director. Substitutes for trees listed by the Planning Director may be considered but only when good reason and data are provided which show that the substitute tree can survive and flourish in the regional climatic conditions.~~
- ~~3. Replacement trees for trees removed shall require a surety deposit for both performance (installation of tree, staking, and providing an irrigation system) and maintenance. Maintenance shall be required for no less than two (2) and no more than five (5) years.~~
- ~~4. Loss of any particular replacement prior to the termination of the maintenance period shall require the landowner at his/her expense to~~

~~replace the lost tree or trees. Under such circumstances, the maintenance period will be automatically extended for a period of two (2) additional years.~~

- ~~5. Release of either the performance or maintenance surety shall only be allowed upon the satisfactory installation or maintenance and upon inspection by the County.~~
  - ~~6. Where a tree or trees have been removed on undeveloped lands and no existing water system is available on the parcel, the replacement tree or trees, if required to be installed, shall be of sufficient size that watering need not be done by automatic means. Under such circumstances, water can be imported by tank or some other suitable method which would ensure tree survival in accordance with subparagraphs (4) and (5), above.~~
  - ~~7. Postponing the planting of replacement trees can be done if approved by the Design Review Administrator.~~
- ~~C. Plant additional drought-tolerant trees from a list maintained by the Planning Director and shrubs as may be required for screening to minimize and soften the appearance and impact of development on the street, adjacent homes, and the community. Substitutes for trees listed by the Planning Director may be considered but only when good reason and data are provided which show that the substitute tree can survive and flourish in the regional climatic conditions.~~
- ~~D. On parcels with no or few trees, plant additional indigenous or other drought-tolerant trees and shrubs as may be required. All trees shall be at least five (5) gallon size stock unless otherwise required by the Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator, as is applicable.~~
- ~~E. Protect all existing significant and heritage trees (as defined in Parts Two and Three of Division VIII of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code) from damage during construction activities including grading. Additional protective measures shall be required for landscaping around significant or heritage trees. The following criteria are to be followed unless topography, proximity of proposed structures, or other valid reason determined by the Design Review Committee or Design Review Administrator, as is applicable, are found to restrict construction so much that protecting any particular significant or heritage tree is not practicable and would mandate less restrictive measures. Any exception to the below listed criteria shall be determined in advance by a licensed landscape architect and best management practices in lieu shall be presented to the decision maker for review and approval:~~
- ~~1. Compaction of soils within the dripline of the tree is to be avoided. Only very limited use of heavy equipment within the dripline shall be allowed and should be brought to the attention of the Design Review Administrator prior to such incursion.~~

- ~~2. Grading in the vicinity of any indigenous significant or heritage oak, bay or madrone tree shall be done with detailed plans provided in advance by a licensed landscape architect. Under no circumstances will fill or excavation at the base of any significant or heritage oak, bay or madrone tree exceed four (4) inches from existing grade.~~
- ~~3. Additional protective measures such as fencing shall be required to prevent damage to the trunks and root systems of trees during grading and construction.~~
- ~~4. Trimming of low lying limbs of indigenous trees should be avoided by rerouting construction equipment or by bracing or guying such limbs out of the way of construction equipment. Any such work to shift limbs shall be done under the strict supervision of a licensed landscape architect or arborist.~~
- ~~5. The transplanting of significant sized or heritage trees is not considered practicable and is to be avoided.~~
- ~~6. Existing significant or heritage trees shall be protected from damage by construction equipment and during felling operations while trees are being removed. Any damage to such a tree shall require the immediate attention of a licensed landscape architect or arborist to determine the extent of the damage and to determine if replacement trees will be required in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph B, above, of this section. In order to assist construction crews in protecting existing trees, a licensed landscape architect or arborist will fence off the trees in advance of any construction work in order to meet the intent of this section. Any such required fencing shall be removed when all construction work has been terminated.~~
- ~~7. Existing significant or heritage trees shall be protected from improper landscape management practices. A program shall be developed by a licensed landscape architect or arborist intended to provide the landowner with guidelines for the care, maintenance and protection of any existing significant and heritage trees.~~

**SECTION 6565.22. DROUGHT.** ~~In the event that a declared drought and a water rationing program is instituted by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors or by the purveyor or other provider of water in a water district, any landscaping required by this Chapter shall be held in abeyance until such time as the water rationing program is terminated and the drought is found to be over. Under such unusual circumstances, the Design Review Committee shall have the applicant enter into an agreement to postpone all landscaping activity for the duration of the declared water emergency and rationing program. Such postponement will terminate when the emergency is declared over and the water rationing program ended at which time the landowner shall install the approved landscape plan.~~

~~**SECTION 6565.23. VIOLATIONS.** Any tree cut, removed, trimmed, or otherwise seriously damaged in violation of this Chapter shall be considered a violation of the provisions of either Part Two (Heritage Tree Ordinance) or Three (Significant Tree Ordinance) of Division VIII of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code, whichever is applicable.~~

DRAFT



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT D3

# **DRAFT**

## **COUNTY OF SAN MATEO DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS**

Dated 1/14/26; To be applied in Design Review (DR) Zoning Districts, upon adoption of Draft Design Review Ordinance Update

### **SECTION 8.256.180 GENERAL DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS**

In addition to the requirements listed in Section 8.256.180, project proponents are encouraged to consider the following recommendations:

1. Consider neighbor view blockage from primary windows, as defined in Section 8.256.250.
2. Consider neighbor privacy (as experienced from their primary windows and main outdoor areas), as defined in Section 8.256.250, when constructing new windows and outdoor areas (patios, decks, and balconies).
3. Consider the architectural style of the main entry as a method of "way-finding", but other methods of way-finding are acceptable (e.g., pathways, porches, lighting, landscaping).
4. When feasible, face garages away from or set back from the street. (See *Figure 28 in Section 8.256.141*)
5. Design buildings to allow for passive heating and cooling, which conserves operational mechanical system and energy needs by using a building's design and natural elements like sun, wind, and insulation to regulate its temperature. Key strategies include orienting the house to capture winter sun and block summer sun, using high-performance insulation, ensuring an airtight envelope, and employing features like strategic window and living space placement on the south and west sides, thermal mass, and natural ventilation.
6. Use of entry towers or singular protruding entry features, with roof/ceiling heights that are more than half of the height of the second floor, are discouraged. (See *Figure 27*)
7. When a prominent garage is unavoidable, use decorative garage door(s) with careful selection of door style, window design, material, color, type (single or double door) to be consistent with architectural style of the house. When feasible, conform to the existing pattern in the size, position, or appearance of the garages in the neighborhood, provided that the pattern conforms with the Design Standards. (See *Figure 29*)
8. Landscaping along retaining walls is encouraged using planted areas along the bottom and top of the walls to reduce their apparent height and blend with their natural surroundings.
9. Any new landscaping shall give remaining trees adequate space and light.

### **SECTION 8.256.180 DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS**

The following design review standards apply to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV), Midcoast, other DR areas in the Coastal Zone, and shall be applied to projects in a manner as specified below:

1. For figures, see Section 8.256.141.
2. When the terms “to the extent feasible” or “when feasible” are used, it shall mean that if a project can be designed to comply with that standard, without conflicting with other applicable design and zoning requirements, the project shall comply with the standard. If a project cannot be designed to comply with the standard and other applicable regulations, it shall be designed to substantially comply.
2. ADUs: This section applies to new ADU construction (detached and attached ADUs) in all design review districts and supplements requirements in Chapters 22.5 and 22.5.1. This section does not apply to existing buildings that will be converted to an ADU where existing walls will remain or to any ADUs outside of design review districts.
3. All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone): Standards as marked with an “X” in table below apply to: 1) non-residential zoning districts or non-residential development located in the Midcoast Project Area and 2) areas in the Coastal Zone outside of the Midcoast Project Area.
4. Design review standards are listed on the left in the table below, along with community areas for application of each standard in columns to the right. Standards apply to all areas of a specific Design Review district area as marked with an “X” in table, but shall only apply to a smaller area within that area if such a notation, in parenthesis, has been added.
5. Design review exterior light standards do not apply to sites under active, permitted construction and other short-term lighting (e.g., holiday lighting, holiday tree and pumpkin lots, decorative string lighting); low-intensity landscape lighting which is directed downward and no greater than three hundred (300) lumens per fixture or low-intensity landscape lighting which is dynamic lighting and no more than one hundred (100) lumens per fixture; lighting required by building or fire codes (e.g., internally illuminated signage); emergency notification lighting (e.g., fire alarm notification appliances); lighting used for public infrastructure (e.g., street lighting); and lighting that illuminates a United States or California flag and the flagpole to which the flag is affixed, provided these luminaires shall be shielded as necessary so that the light source is not visible from the property line.
6. Design review standards do not apply to projects and project elements specifically approved under County permit, for which design details were approved and the project built to substantially comply with the permit, as determined by the Director of Planning and Building.
7. Applicability of County Regulations: In addition to the requirements listed in the table below, project proponents shall design projects to comply with other regulations, not limited to the applicable zoning (including but not limited to daylight plane requirements), building, and fire codes, preservation of protected trees in accordance with Chapter 8.400 of the County Ordinance Code, protection of sensitive habitat and minimization of hazard per the County’s General Plan and Local Coastal Program, and applicable fire codes in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zones.

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

No.	STANDARD	ADUs	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
A	<b><u>Building Siting</u></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 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). <i>(For low eave design, see Figures 11-15).</i>	X <i>(Montara Only)</i>		X <i>(Montara Only)</i>	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 <i>(Coastal zone only)</i>		X <i>(Source: CDM; other areas)</i>	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 <i>(Coastal zone only)</i>		X <i>(LCP 8.12.b)</i>	X <i>(LCP 8.12.b)</i>
4	Development shall only be placed on or above a ridgeline if there is no other developable building site on the parcel. If placed above a ridgeline, building height shall be limited to 15 feet above the ridgeline. Please refer to LCP Policy 8.7 for development on skyline and ridgelines.	X <i>(Coastal zone only)</i>		X	X
4	Streams, creeks, and other natural drainage systems shall not be altered (e.g., re-directed, channeled) including removal of native, non-invasive vegetation on creek banks. Culverts and bridges over streams may be allowed if necessary to provide access and found not to significantly impact sensitive habitat. <i>(See Figure 5)</i>	X	X	X	X

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

No.	STANDARD	ADUs	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
<i>Blue Highlight = Added to standards for area</i>					
<b>B <u>Compatibility with Surrounding Buildings</u></b>					
1	The design of new buildings shall incorporate building and/or roof forms, colors, and/or materials of neighborhood buildings and the surrounding natural environment. (See Figure 24)	X	X	X	X (Rural area only)
2	An addition to an existing structure shall use building and/or roof forms, and color and/or materials, to be compatible with the existing structure.	X	X	X	X
<b>C <u>Building Shapes and Bulk</u></b>					
1	For lots with a 15% slope or steeper in the area of proposed development, for those portion(s) of the primary building above the existing grade, design buildings with shapes that step up or down hillsides in the same direction as the natural grade. (See Figures 4 and 9).		X	X	X
2	Prohibit buildings with an extension built out over a slope supported on stilts higher than 10 feet.		X	X	
<b>D <u>Building Articulation</u></b>					
1	Wall and Facade Articulation: Require Wall and/or Facade Articulation for walls over 20 feet in length (with the exception of garage walls and walls facing only the interior of the parcel). One articulation detail is required for every 20 feet of the wall length for each story. This standard only applies to new construction; existing walls to remain are exempt. (See Figures 17 and 18)	X	X (Source: ELH; PP DR standards)	X	
1a	Wall Articulation: Step or off-set extending to grade, with a minimum depth of 5 inches. (See Figures 17 and 18)	X	X (Source: ELH; PP DR standards)	X	
1b	Façade Articulation: Architectural detail (decks, bays, windows, balconies, trellis feature), ornamentation, or change in building materials or colors.	X	X (Source: ELH; PP DR standards)	X	
2	Prohibit designs where upper-story walls overhang or cantilever out over lower-story walls by more than 5 feet. Larger wall overhangs and/or cantilevers may be utilized in	X (Coastal Zone Only)		X	

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

No.	STANDARD	ADUs	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
	<b>Blue Highlight = Added to standards for area</b>				
	a modern architectural design to provide a unified design.				
3	Commercial Development: Incorporate nautical elements into building design, use wood or shingle siding, employ natural or sea colors, and use pitched roofs.			X (Princeton Only; LCP 8.13)	
4	In new buildings, incorporate traditional design feature(s) found in the San Gregorio House and other houses in the community (e.g., clean and simple lines, steep roof slopes, placement of windows and doors at regular intervals, doors and windows of equal proportions, and wood construction). Require remodeling of existing buildings to retain and respect these traditional architectural features, if any.				X San Gregorio Only; LCP 8.13)
5	In new buildings, incorporate architectural design features found in the historic buildings of the community (see inventory listing) (e.g., clean and simple lines, precise detailing, steep roof slopes, symmetrical relationship of windows and doors, wood construction, white paint). Require remodeling of existing buildings to retain these traditional architectural features, if any.				X Pescadero Only; LCP 8.13)
<b>E</b>	<b><u>Windows, Doors, and Decks</u></b>				
1	On building sides that do not conform to zoning district setbacks, windows facing residential development shall have a sill height of 6'6" or higher, with the exception of one, minimum size, egress window with opaque glass. This standard only applies to new construction; existing walls to remain are exempt.	X	X (Residential Use Only)	X	
2	No rooftop decks are allowed in the sections of buildings that do not conform to zoning district setbacks and directly adjoin residential development located on the other side of the non-conforming yard.	X	X	X	
<b>F</b>	<b><u>Roofs</u></b>				
1	White roofing is prohibited (however, non-white light colors such as pale gray and beige are	X	X (Source: ELH/PP DR	X	X

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

No.	STANDARD	ADUs	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
	<b>Blue Highlight = Added to standards for area</b>				
	allowed). Metal roofs are allowed but metallic treatments (silver, copper, untreated galvanized steel) are prohibited.		standards)		
2	Design buildings using primarily pitched roofs where more than 50% of the whole roof area is pitched, unless the existing main house to remain has a flat roof.	X (ELH/P P/DEV Only)	X		
<b>G</b>	<b><u>Exterior Lighting</u></b>				
1	All exterior, landscape, and site lighting shall be designed and located so that light is the minimum necessary to support the activity designated for that area, where light bulb is shielded, and light is downward-directed, away from neighbors, and confined to the site. Soffit lighting shall be limited to covered entry areas and outdoor covered patios (limited to a maximum of 1 soffit light for every 5 linear feet of these areas). Flood lights are not allowed. (See Figure 28)	X	X (Source: PP DR standards)	X	X
2	For areas visible from and within 50 feet from scenic corridors, limit the number of exterior light fixtures to the minimum required by Building Code.	X		X	X
3	All exterior lighting shall use warm, yellow light tones with a color rating of 2200 Kelvin (k) or lower.	X		X	X
4	Lighting around the perimeter of a site is prohibited, except where it is controlled by motion sensor which extinguishes the light no later than ten (10) minutes after activation.	X	X	X	X
<b>H</b>	<b><u>Grading and Hardscape</u></b>				
1	When an existing on-site driveway can be used to access the site of an ADU, an ADU shall utilize the existing driveway (making alterations as needed) for vehicular access.	X			
2	Prohibit raised building pads of more than 8 inches" above the low side of the existing grade, unless required for technical or engineering reasons identified by a registered civil engineer, licensed architect or geotechnical consultant.	X (ADUs over 500 sf)	X (Source: ELH/PP DR standards)	X	X

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>  <i>Blue Highlight = Added to standards for area</i>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
3	For single-family residential lots where the front half of the lot slopes upward an average of 15% or more from the street, do not place more than 50% of the height of the garage below existing grade, unless necessary to meet maximum slope and driveway elevation requirements of the Department of Public Works or applicable fire district, in order to minimize project grading for garage and driveways and alteration to the natural topography.	X	X	X	
4	On sloped single-family residential sites with an average of 20% or more, no more than 50% of the exterior areas (excluding buildings) may be excavated to provide for a flat terrain for accessory areas, including but not limited to patios, pools, and walkways (excludes driveways).	X	X (Source: ELH/PP DR standards)	X	
5	For single-family residential lots, limit the amount of hardscape areas (excludes xeriscaping) in front yard for non-driveway, non-walkways areas (e.g. uncovered patios, non-required uncovered parking areas, outdoor storage areas), to a maximum of 50% of exterior areas (excluding buildings) of the property, unless hardscape areas will be screened by landscaping to reduce visual impact from residential areas and from roadways.	X	X (Source: PP DR standards)	X	X
I	<b><u>Utilities and Ancillary Structures</u></b>				
1	Utilities: Install all new service lines underground for the segment extending from the nearest existing distribution point/pole to the new residence or new detached ADU. Applies to residential major remodel/addition where electrical panel will be replaced.	X	X	X	X (Scenic Corridor Only)
2	When located in areas that are visible from a street or neighboring property, new wells, storage tanks, exterior trash and storage areas, irrigation backflow prevention devices, transformers, air conditioning units, heat pumps, generators, and other ancillary structures shall be screened from view.	X	X	X	

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>  <i>Blue Highlight = Added to standards for area</i>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</u>	<u>MidCoast</u>	<u>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</u>
<b>J <u>Garages and Carports</u></b>					
1	A new garage/carport to serve an ADU shall count towards floor area of the property and must not exceed 250 s.f.	X			
<b>K <u>Exterior Colors and Materials</u></b>					
1	For the main body color of a building, use colors such as warm grays, beiges, natural woods, and muted greens. Use of color(s) with a Light Reflectance Value (LRV) of 50% or higher as the main body color of the house is prohibited.	X (ELH, PP, DEV only)	X		X
2	Prohibit reflective materials, with the exception of architectural copper trim details (roof gutters, downspouts, etc).	X (ELH, PP, DEV only)	X	X	X (A)
3	On all building sides, use primarily natural-appearing building materials, such as wood (or wood-like), stone, board and batten, wall siding or shingles, fire-resistant roof shingles, flagstone, and rock. Stucco may only be used as a secondary material. This standard only applies to new construction; existing walls to remain are exempt.	X (Detached ADUs only; in ELH, DEV, PP only)	X		
4	Use of T-111 plywood is prohibited.	X	X	X	X
5	Industrial Development: Employ natural or sea colors, textured building materials, and landscaping to add visual interest and soften the harsh lines of standard or stock building forms normally used in industrial districts.			X (Princeton Only; LCP 8.13)	
<b>L <u>Landscaping and Fences/Walls</u></b>					
1	Chainlink fences are prohibited in residential areas.	X	X	X	X
2	If CMU or cement block retaining walls are used, walls shall be textured, surfaced, painted, landscaped or otherwise treated to blend with their surroundings.	X	X (Source: PP DR standards)	X	X
3	All landscaping shall be drought-tolerant, native, and non-invasive. No plant species listed as problematic and/or invasive by the California Native Plant Society, the California Invasive		X	X	X

**DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS & APPLICATION TABLE**

<u>No.</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>	<u>ADUs</u>	<u><i>Emerald Lake Hills/Oak Knoll (ELH), Palomar Park (PP), Devonshire (DEV)</i></u>	<u><i>MidCoast</i></u>	<u><i>All Other DR Areas (Coastal Zone)</i></u>
	<b>Blue Highlight = Added to standards for area</b>				
	Plant Council, or by the State of California shall be planted. No plant species listed as a “noxious weed” by the State of California or the U.S. Federal Government shall be planted. Landscaping plan shall comply with Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance.				
4	All new SFDs require landscaping (new or retention of existing) in the street fronting yards		X	X	
M	<b>Multiple Lot Development</b>				
	<i>Multiple contiguous or nearby (within the same block) projects developed concurrently by one owner, applicant, developer, or builder, shall comply with the above standards applicable for residential development for the project area as well as the following additional standards:</i>				
1	Do not use the same, or same but reversed, building elevations and/or floor plans located directly across the street from each other or on adjacent parcels.		X	X	
2	Vary design style, exterior detail, rooflines, finish materials, and landscaping so that appearance is not repetitive.		X	X	
N	<b>Signs and Parking Lots</b>				
1	Paved areas such as parking lots, driveways, sidewalks, should be secondary to buildings in visual prominence as viewed from the street and landscaped to reduce visual impact.				X (Source: CDM)
2	Parking areas shall be screened from residential areas and from scenic roadways.				X (Source: CDM)
3	On-premise signs should be integrated with the design of the structure and should not extend above the roof line of the structure.				X (Source: CDM)
4	Brightly illuminated, rotating, reflective, blinking, flashing or moving signs, pennants or streamers are prohibited.				X (Source: CDM)

Source notes:  
 “CDM” refers to the Community Design Manual



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT E

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

\* \* \* \* \*

**RESOLUTION DIRECTING SUBMITTAL OF THE NEW CHAPTER 28.1  
OF THE 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**

**RESOLVED**, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California, that

**WHEREAS**, in November 1980, the San Mateo County Local Coastal Program (LCP) was certified by the California Coastal Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, since its certification, the LCP has been amended at various times, to improve its conformity with the California Coastal Act or respond to local circumstances; and

**WHEREAS**, amendment of must be certified by the California Coastal Commission as conforming with the California Coastal Act, prior to taking effect in the County's Coastal Zone; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors has adopted, by ordinance, a new Chapter 28.1 (Section 6565) of the County Zoning Regulations, regulating the Design Review

(DR) District in the County's Coastal Zone, as well as related text amendments to other chapters of the Zoning Regulations to conform to the updated Chapter 28.1; and

**WHEREAS**, the ordinance constitutes an amendment of the Local Coastal Program; and

**WHEREAS**, these amendments will not be effective in the County's Coastal Zone until they have been reviewed and certified by the California Coastal Commission; and

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY DETERMINED AND ORDERED** that the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California, resolves as follows: Planning and Building Department staff are directed to submit the new Chapter 28.1 of the County Zoning Regulations regulating Design Review (DR) Districts, and related conforming zoning text amendments, as amendments to the Local Coastal Program, to the California Coastal Commission for review and certification

\* \* \* \* \*



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT F

**ATTACHMENT F**

**Examples of Subjective language and Revised standard using Objective Language:**

For a requirement to be considered objective, it should include specific criteria (including numeric specifics), such that compliance with any particular standard can be easily determined by the applicant and County staff reviewing a project. To this end, the Design Review Ordinance Update Project replaces occurrences of the following language with objective criteria, with examples as listed:

<b>Examples of Subjective language:</b>	<b>Revised standard using Objective Language:</b>
Subjective verbs: “Minimize”, “maximize”, or “limit”	
<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <p><i>Minimize filling or placement of earth materials.</i></p> <p><i>Allow limited excavation when needed to blend the house into the site.</i></p>	<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <p><i>Prohibit raised building pads of more than 8 inches” above the low side of the existing grade[...]</i></p> <p><i>For single-family residential lots where the front half of the lot slopes upward an average of 15% or more from the street, do not place more than 50% of the height of the garage below existing grade[...]</i></p>
Subjective Adjectives: “Compatible with”, “complementing”, “respecting of”, “blending with”	
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p><i>Use an architectural style and design elements that complement the predominant style of nearby homes, only when such homes conform with the design standards.</i></p>	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p><i>The design of new buildings shall incorporate building and/or roof forms, colors, and/or materials of adjacent buildings and natural environment.</i></p>
Subjective Adjectives: “Well-articulated”, “smooth transition”, “adequate”	
<p><i>Design well-articulated and proportioned facades[...]</i></p>	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p><i>Require Wall and/or Facade Articulation for walls over 20 feet in length (with the exception</i></p>

	<p><i>of garage walls and walls facing only the interior of the parcel). One articulation detail is required for every 20 feet of the wall length for each story.</i></p>
<p><b>Subjective Qualifiers: “When feasible”</b></p>	
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p><i>Locate the primary portion of the second stories toward the center of the first story and away from property lines whenever feasible.</i></p>	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p><i>In Midcoast, the Project eliminates the option for compliance with Daylight Plane or Façade Articulation to require both.</i></p>



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT G

Date: January 9, 2025

To: Supervisor Ray Mueller  
District 3, San Mateo County

From: Coastside Design Review Committee

Re: Demonstration of Project Scale Policy and Story Poles

### Background

San Mateo County's Demonstration of Project Scale Policy revised in July 2024 ([link](#)) describes two options for proposed projects to satisfy the policy: 1) the construction of story poles and 2) the use of visual methods such as digital imaging simulations, computer modeling, and other visual techniques. Since the policy has been in place since 2020, most projects have elected to use visual methods to demonstrate project scale. This option has not only resulted in numerous community complaints via written correspondences and in-person speakers but has also yielded incomplete and potentially misleading representation of the projects.

The CDRC had previously recommended in October 2020 to change County policy to require story poles ([link](#), pages 23-26), after much research, including evaluations of similar story pole requirements in other counties and cities. Our current committee members concur with the October 2020 recommendation and, in summary, propose the following changes:

1. **Mandatory Use of Story Poles:**

We request that the County require the use of story poles for all new construction over 500 square feet and for any second or third-story addition that alters the roofline of an existing structure. Story poles are a simple yet effective tool to visually communicate the size and scope of a proposed building or addition, allowing residents and design review boards to better understand the potential impacts on the surrounding area, including issues of privacy, light, and aesthetics.

2. **Exemption from Design Review for Small, Single-Story Buildings:**

We propose that all new construction that is 16 feet in height or under and 500 square feet and under to be exempt from the formal design review process. While still adhering to applicable building codes and safety standards, this would streamline approvals for smaller, less intrusive projects, helping to reduce unnecessary delays for homeowners while maintaining community oversight for larger, more impactful projects.

These changes would not only help clarify the visual and spatial impact of new developments but also foster better communication between developers and the community, enhancing transparency and reducing concerns about potential adverse effects on our neighborhoods.

We believe these updates will help strike a balance between promoting responsible growth and preserving the character of our local communities.

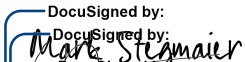
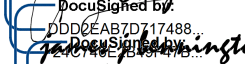
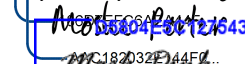
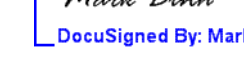
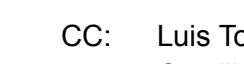
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Objective changes as follows:

- New construction of 500 square feet or less will be exempt from design review.
- Story poles are to be required for all new construction over 500 sq feet.
- Story poles are to be required for all two-story or greater additions to existing homes that modify the roof-line.
- Single-story additions 16 feet or under are exempt from story poles.
- Story poles shall not require survey or certification.

We expect these changes to be included in the design standard update for public comment and review at a later date and written in alignment with the current story pole specifications.

Respectfully,  
Coastside Design Review Committee

DocuSigned by:  
 Mark Stegmaier  
DocuSigned by:  
 April Bingham  
DocuSigned by:  
 James Bennington  
DocuSigned by:  
 Moshe Porter  
DocuSigned by:  
 Mark Dinh  
DocuSigned By: Mark Dinh

CC: Luis Topete, Design Review Officer, San Mateo County  
Camille Leung, Senior Planner, San Mateo County  
Steve Monowitz, Director of Planning and Building, San Mateo County



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT H1

# ATTACHMENT H1: Fee Study for New Design Review Fees

## Planning and Building Department (Dept.)

January 20, 2025

The design review ordinance provides for a new, ministerial design review process for certain project types, and also creates a new process for review and approval of exceptions to design standards. Accordingly, staff prepared this study to determine the appropriate fees for these services.

Under State law, the County can charge service fees for land development and planning services, provided the fees do not exceed the estimated reasonable costs of providing the services. Gov. Code § 66014. The Department conducted a comprehensive fee study for its fees (the Planning Service Fee Schedule), documenting estimated labor and related costs for each permit type, and the Board adopted the updated Planning Service Fee Schedule on November 19, 2024 (effective January 1, 2025; see Board of Supervisors Resolution Number 080751).

To determine appropriate fees for the new design review services, staff compared the process and work products required for the new services to existing permit processes and associated fees on the adopted Planning Service Fee Schedule. By identifying existing fees for services with comparable levels of staff effort, staff has demonstrated that the proposed fees will not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing these services.

In addition, prior to approving an increase in an existing fee or service charge, or adopting a new fee or service charge, the County is required to “make available to the public data indicating the amount of cost, or estimated cost, required to provide the service for which the fee or service charge is levied and the revenue sources anticipated to provide the service, including General Fund revenues.” Gov. Code § 66016. The publication of this fee study fulfills that requirement.

<i>New Review Type</i>	<i>Process and Work Products</i>	<i>Proposed New Fee</i>	<i>Comparable Existing Permit/Process and Adopted Fee</i>
<b>Review Fees</b>			
Ministerial Design Review Fee for New Single Family Residential Construction	Staff-Level; no referral; no noticing; no letter of decision	\$861	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Development Footprint Analysis (DFA): \$861</li></ul>

Ministerial Design Review Fee for New Commercial/Multiple Family Residential Construction	Staff-Level; no referral; no noticing; no letter of decision	\$861	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Footprint Analysis (DFA): \$861</li> </ul>
Ministerial Design Review Fee for Single Family Residential Alteration and/or Addition; Detached/Attached ADUs	Staff-Level; no referral; no noticing; no letter of decision	\$646	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal Design Review Exemption: \$646 (Formal Design Review exemption requires less review but requires poster notice)</li> </ul>
<b>Exception Fees</b>			
Minor Design Review Exception	Staff-Level; no referral; no noticing; letter of decision	\$861 (added to applicable review fee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Footprint Analysis (DFA): \$861</li> </ul>
Major Design Review Exception (via Use Permit)	Hearing-Level; no referral; noticing; staff report; letter of decision	\$4,079 (added to applicable review fee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Permit (\$6,041)</li> </ul>

### Summary of Design Review Fees

In addition to the new fees listed above, current design review fees will remain in effect. The following is a comprehensive list of the design review fees upon adoption of the proposed ordinance and resolution. The new fees are shown in underline; existing fees are in regular text:

- Formal Design Review Exemption: \$646
- Ministerial Design Review Fee for New Single Family Residential Construction: \$861
- Ministerial Design Review Fee for New Commercial/Multiple Family Residential Construction: \$861
- Ministerial Design Review Fee for Single Family Residential Alteration and/or Addition; Detached/Attached ADU: \$646
- Discretionary Review by Coastside Design Review Committee – New Use: \$6,041
- Discretionary Review by Coastside Design Review Committee – Major Revision or Addition to Existing Use: \$3,770
- Minor Design Review Exception: \$861 (added to applicable review fee)
- Major Design Review Exception: \$4,079 (added to applicable review fee)

Fees are subject to the annual cost adjustment and all other notes on the effective Planning Service Fee Schedule.

DRAFT



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

# **ATTACHMENT H2**

## RESOLUTION NO.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

\* \* \* \* \*

### RESOLUTION AMENDING THE PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT PLANNING SERVICE FEE SCHEDULE TO ADD DESIGN REVIEW FEES FOR MINISTERIAL REVIEW AND EXCEPTIONS

---

**RESOLVED**, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California, that

**WHEREAS**, County Ordinance No. 2193, adopted April 10, 1973, authorizes the setting by resolution of fees for permits and services provided by the Planning and Building Department; and

**WHEREAS**, Government Code Section 66014 authorizes the County to recover from permit applicants the cost of processing land use applications and providing services, including fees for planning permits, building permits, and related services; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 19, 2024, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution Number 080751 (effective January 1, 2025) adopting the current the Planning Service Fee Schedule for fees for permits and services provided by the Planning and Building Department; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed design review ordinance creates new services to be provided by Planning and Building Department staff in connection with design review applications, requiring an amendment to the Planning Service Fee Schedule to include fees for such services; and

**WHEREAS**, Planning and Building Department staff conducted an analysis of the existing fees charged for similar planning services, and the staff effort required to provide the services, to determine the estimated reasonable costs of providing the new services and this analysis is set forth in a Fee Study, dated [TBD], which this Board has reviewed in connection with this matter; and

**WHEREAS**, this Board has reviewed the proposed fees, which include a Ministerial Design Review Fee for New Single Family Residential Construction fee of \$861, a Ministerial Design Review Fee for New Commercial/Multiple Family Residential Construction fee of \$861, a Ministerial Design Review Fee for Single Family Residential Alteration and/or Addition and Detached/Attached ADU fee of \$646, a Minor Design Review Exception fee of \$861, and a Major Design Review Exception fee of \$4,079, as well as the basis for their calculation and the justification for the fees as set forth in the Fee Study presented in this matter; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Services Fee Schedule's existing appeal fee of \$1,962 will apply to any appeals filed pursuant to County Ordinance Code Chapter 5.148; and

**WHEREAS**, the new fees are subject to the annual cost adjustment and all notes on the effective Planning Service Fee Schedule; and

**WHEREAS**, notice of the proposed fees was provided and data supporting the proposed fees was made available at least 10 days prior to the Board of Supervisors meeting on February 10, 2025, at which meeting public comment was accepted; and

**WHEREAS**, in adopting the proposed fees the Board of Supervisors finds that (1) the purpose of the proposed fees is to recover staff costs to provide the service; (2) the revenue generated by the fees will be used to cover the costs to the County to perform design review and grant minor and major exceptions; and (3) the fees do not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fees are charged.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY DETERMINED AND ORDERED** that the Board of Supervisors hereby amends the Planning Service Fee Schedule as set forth in this resolution and in Attachment **XXX** to the Board memorandum, and directs the Director of Planning and Building or designee to collect the fees shown thereon and to deposit them in the County treasury.

\* \* \* \* \*



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT D

## Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar  
PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 | [midcoastcommunitycouncil.org](http://midcoastcommunitycouncil.org)*

**Kimberly Williams**  
Chair

**Scott Bollinger**  
Vice Chair

**Gus Mattammal**  
Treasurer

**Claire Toutant**  
Secretary

**Antonio Conte**  
**Connie Santilli**  
**David Santoro**

Date: March 25, 2026

To: San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
San Mateo County Planning Commission  
Steve Monowitz, Director, SMC Planning and Building

Cc: Ray Mueller, Supervisor, District 3  
Marisol Escalera, Chief of Staff, Office of Supervisor Ray Mueller  
Camille Leung, Senior Planner, SMC Planning and Building

Subject: **Comments on the Update to Coastside Design Review Standards**

Dear San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commissioners, Director Monowitz, and Senior Planner Leung,

The Midcoast Community Council, an advisory Council representing the unincorporated Midcoast communities of Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar, respectfully submits the following comments on the proposed changes to the County Design Review Standards.

We appreciate the County Planning staff's efforts to update the Standards with the goal of creating a more objective process, and we are generally supportive of this goal. However, we have the following concerns that have not been addressed.

1) Context and language

We notice that in some cases streamlining a process is conflated with making the text shorter by removing context and explanatory language that ensures clarity for public understanding. Having objective measurable standards doesn't negate the need for context and we encourage the document to be more user-friendly and written for anyone to understand. The document also lacks consistency in its subjective vs objective language.

The MCC has serious concerns in regard to changes made to eliminate some standards simply because the County has neglected to enforce them, as mentioned on page 8 in the summary of updates. The County's lack of enforcement shouldn't be a basis for determining whether those standards are important or necessary. If we routinely eliminate standards where the County has "ignored" enforcement, there would be no standards remaining, therefore this explanation seems arbitrary and we ask that the

County provide a well-reasoned, documented case for these specific recommended changes.

There are several passages in section 8.256.010 ESTABLISHMENT, PURPOSE, AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT OF DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT, with language mentioning “public health, safety, comfort, convenience, happiness and welfare of the citizens”. We suggest omitting the words ‘comfort, convenience and happiness’, thereby focusing on ensuring the public health, safety, and welfare of citizens, as more objective language.

There are also concerns about E.1, where the proposed wording seems to indicate the County is encouraging builders to develop land generally. The original language, "interdependence of land value and aesthetics" actually does capture the intention. We suggest the following alternative language: "To recognize the interdependence of land values and aesthetics and to provide a method by which the County may encourage an approach to land development so that its value and attractiveness will endure." There is data correlating land value with aesthetics, showing association with higher property values, so this language is objective, unbiased, and quantifiable.

In section 8.256.020. ESTABLISHMENT OF DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE, DESIGN REVIEW ADMINISTRATOR AND DESIGN REVIEW OFFICER, the overall structure of the Design Review Committee is unclear and should be described in the first paragraph, to explain the number of members (3) and alternates (3) for the CDRC now that the other design review committees have been dissolved. Alternates and nearest residing members are mentioned further down, but it's not clear how this fits with the appointment process and whether alternates for the community member on the CDRC and for the professional architect members, are interchangeable. If that context can be found elsewhere, it should be referenced.

In this section also, in item A.5, having the CDRC develop and adopt its own conflict of interest code would seem to be a direct conflict of interest.

## 2) Outdoor Residential Lighting

The MCC has been requesting improved lighting standards for several years. We fully support the integration of DarkSky International's Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting into the Design Review Standards. The initial draft document specified a residential lighting Correlated Color Temperature (CCT) of 2200 Kelvin (K), which received strong support from the Midcoast community. However, just prior to the Planning Commission meeting at which these draft Standards were considered, and after the County had circulated and presented the draft document at public meetings, the County changed its recommendation to 3000 K, ignoring the strong support from the public and support of the Planning Commissioners for the limit of 2200 K originally proposed.

The MCC reviewed the proposed Design Review Standards twice, and both times received multiple comments in support of a CCT of 2200 K. Indeed, we received no comments that it should be otherwise. We are very concerned that this change doesn't reflect what the Midcoast community has requested and has worked diligently to

research and encourage for a number of years and we ask that the 2200 K CCT standard be reinstated in the Design Review requirements to apply to both commercial and residential buildings. The community has already established a precedent on limiting to a 2200 K CCT in both our neighborhood street lights (overseen by DPW) and the El Granada Elementary School remodel (overseen by County Planning), which, in the latter case, implemented recommendations from an experienced DarkSky consultant.

Over the last several years, the Midcoast community has been impacted by a growing number of lighting issues that significantly impact quality of life, including excessively bright LED lighting that is blue-rich, light trespass, nighttime glare, sleep disruption, sky glow obscuring views of the night sky, light scatter in foggy conditions, and disruption and impacts to wildlife and domestic animals (an alpaca farm in Montara in one instance). In that time, the MCC has received many comments and complaints from those impacted by excessive nighttime lighting, and we are still receiving such complaints as recently as February of this year.

As noted in the [MCC's letter of October 9, 2024](#), in an effort to better understand the issue, we had a leading scientist in the field, [Dr. Travis Longcore](#) of UCLA, give a [presentation to the community](#) and answer questions in 2023. We have also reviewed information and recommendations from [DarkSky International](#) along with ordinances adopted by other California municipalities and counties. Based on this information and community feedback, we continue to recommend the development of a lighting ordinance for the Midcoast unincorporated areas that follows DarkSky International's guidelines and recommended best practices to address this ongoing problem. Therefore this change to the Design Review Standards is extremely important in helping us address the needs of the coastside community and to address impacts to sensitive habitats and wildlife, including shoreline habitats, marine life in the tidal zone, migratory birds, sea birds, several owl species, and sensitive ecosystems that are a part of and surround our community.

In response to comments SMC Planning and Building made about enforcement, MCC submits that the County's enforcement track record is thin and inconsistent at best, regardless of what are the stated Standards requirements. While we would like enforcement to improve, we recognize there are budget and employee capacity challenges generally. However, this is an insufficient reason to accept poorer standards. By that logic, the County would never improve any of its practices. Technology has evolved and improved. Currently lighting fixtures and lights that meet DarkSky International recommendations, including the 2200 K CCT, are widely available. This fact was pointed out by a planning commissioner during the Planning Commission meeting where these changes were considered.

Additionally, if bringing existing residences into compliance is a concern, we recommend a reasonable phase-in period (or phase-in triggers) for existing residential buildings of 3–5 years and/or some change in condition that would require the lighting be brought up to compliance, (e.g., when certain other, unrelated permit applications are applied for). Specific complaints of significant lighting impacts to neighboring properties or sensitive areas, would also trigger compliance as it does currently. As to enforcement, we don't

expect the County to conduct an assessment of all homes for compliance, but we do expect that the standard should be a tool whereby, if a complaint arises where the lighting is out of compliance, it serves as a tool to address the issue in a straightforward manner to bring it into compliance. This isn't much different from what happens now on the Midcoast. More importantly, having the recommended DarkSky lighting standard of 2200 K also ensures that any new residential buildings will be required to meet and maintain that standard as a condition of approval.

The following language could apply to address complaints: If a lighting source has been determined to be a nuisance, it may be subject to correction or redesign at the discretion of the Planning Director. Corrective actions could include requirements for shielding, filtering, redirecting, replacement of the fixture or source, removal, or a combination of these to eliminate the lighting trespass, pollution, or nuisance.

More counties and municipalities are developing and adopting modern dark sky friendly lighting policies, including most recently Humboldt County and the City of Palo Alto. The County of Ventura's lighting ordinance has a section for the Coastal Zone's specific scenic resource and sensitive habitat areas. The California Coastal Commission has also expressed strong support for dark sky friendly lighting policies. Findings in their report for Humboldt County's hearing are applicable to the San Mateo County Midcoast, citing lighting impacts to ESHA, parks, open space, and recreation areas in the County's coastal zone.

The unincorporated Midcoast is rural with limited semi-urban areas in close proximity to parks, open space, beaches, and recreation areas, and the coastal commercial areas are also situated near beach and bluff areas. In Montara, Moss Beach, and El Granada, residential neighborhoods are adjacent to federal, state, and local parks and recreation areas as well as a marine reserve. We note that the proposed update only mentions Montara as bordering park land and open space, and this should be corrected.

The DarkSky International organization is a leading authority on best practices for outdoor lighting based on science. They recommend a CCT of 2200 K as best practice to minimize negative environmental impacts. When higher than 2200 K CCT is necessary to meet lighting objectives that are exceptions, they recommend total emission of blue light into the environment should be kept as low as reasonably possible through low intensities, careful targeting, and reduced operating times.

In regard to exempt lighting, we suggest that it may only be considered exempt so long as it results in no light trespass: (1) off the property, (2) to the night sky, or (3) to any ESHA. Acceptable exemptions may include: temporary holiday decorations, fixtures that illuminate flags, but are turned off by a certain time (subject to Federal and State flag codes), string lights that have warmer color temperatures only and are turned off by 10 p.m., emergency lighting, and motion detected lighting sources that have an activation limit of 5 minutes or less and that cannot be triggered from outside the property boundary.

According to DarkSky International, blue light, including the amount of blue light from a 3000 K CCT, scatters locally in the atmosphere and is redirected back toward earth, cumulatively manifesting as sky glow. A light with 3000 K CCT contains a higher percentage of blue light, double that of a 2200 K CCT. The Coastal Commission noted that “limits designed to control light trespass including shielding, do not on their own adequately protect ESHA and parks and recreation areas from degradation, because they do not address diffuse light from non-discrete sources that accumulates in the atmosphere from the cumulative effects of higher color temperature light sources.”

San Mateo County is also part of the Pacific flyway for migratory birds. The glare and skyglow created by scattered light can disrupt navigation, particularly during inclement weather that further scatters light and affects visibility. Bird light entrapment is also now well documented.

3) Bird safe glass and anti-glare glass

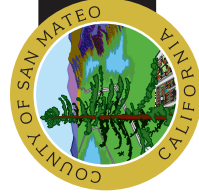
In addition to reducing light pollution at night, we agree with remarks from Green Foothills that bird safe design should be incorporated in the Design Review Standards requirements. Education around bird-friendly glass that cuts down on bird collisions has become a more pressing issue as over one billion birds are killed each year from collisions with glass. As mentioned above, the County of San Mateo is in the Pacific flyway and bird-safe design standards are important across the entire County.

Also, in recent years the glare from structures that contain more glass surface area is substantial at certain times of day. Given the rise in residential projects that contain significant glass surface area, the MCC supports Design Review Standards requirements that help reduce large areas of transparent or reflective glass, and to utilize low-glare glass options in addition to e-glass and other bird safe solutions. Bird-safe and anti-glare glass should be required on all new building projects and any remodels involving large glass windows, glass doors, glass fence panels, garage doors, or other large glass surfaces.

The MCC would like to see the County demonstrate a meaningful commitment to addressing light pollution, including lighting impacts to neighborhoods, sensitive habitats and environments, wildlife, and scenic resources. Better lighting standards are a win-win for everyone and are in line with protections for coastal resources and sensitive areas. As mentioned earlier, a lighting standard of 2200 K is strongly supported by the Midcoast community and we ask the Board of Supervisors to approve Design Review Standards that include this requirement and the other policy improvements we have highlighted.

Sincerely,

Midcoast Community Council  
/s/ Kimberly Williams, Chair



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT E

**From:** [Shani Kleinhaus](#)  
**To:** [Camille Leung](#)  
**Cc:** [Sophie Mintier](#); [Alice Kaufman](#)  
**Subject:** Re: San Mateo County: Design Review Ordinance Update Project  
**Date:** Saturday, April 11, 2026 9:06:55 AM

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Hi Camille,

There are many ways to design buildings that are safer for birds. The easiest solutions involve 1) less glass, and/or 2) simple protections, such as insect screens. For both single- and multi-family housing, insect screens are often the best and most affordable option. They're already common and can meet guidelines without changing the glazing spec.

For projects that do use bird-friendly glass, costs vary quite a bit depending on the product and configuration. Based on a survey of manufacturers conducted by the American Bird Conservancy in the last few months, the added cost relative to "standard" glass can range roughly from ~20% to over 100%, but that range is highly dependent on the baseline glass and the treatment type (UV patterns, frit, etch, etc.).

In absolute terms, this can be as low as about \$5–\$7 per square foot for some options, though higher-end products can cost more. Another option that works well for smaller projects is to use standard home windows and apply feather friendly film prior to installation, which would cost only a few dollars a square foot (commonly cited Feather Friendly estimates of \$12-15 per square foot include labor for installation on existing buildings, but the materials-only cost is quite low)

**In the context of overall development cost, this adds a fraction of a percent. Case studies the American Bird Conservancy reviewed consistently show that even when bird-friendly glass is used, the added cost is typically on the order of about 0.4% to 0.8% of total project cost.**

**There's also a design factor here: a building with a window-to-wall ratio (~30%) that incorporates bird-friendly elements where needed can actually cost less overall than a highly glass-heavy façade, regardless of bird requirements. Since glass is one of the more expensive façade materials, using less of it is often the biggest cost lever.**

Moreover, window-to-wall ratios above roughly 30% significantly increase heating and cooling energy demand. A more balanced façade reduces long-term energy consumption, lowering operating costs for residents. If housing affordability is the concern, reducing both upfront material costs and long-term utility expenses directly supports that goal. In that context, bird-friendly design encourages smarter, more cost-effective façade strategies rather than adding expense.

In the recently adopted Palo Alto Bird-Friendly Design ordinance, the City exempted 100% affordable housing projects. In Bird-sensitive areas (foothills and baylands), the City requires 90% of elevations to be treated. For residential development elsewhere, up to 40% can be untreated.

I think it's important to recognize that bird-friendly design, with less glass, saves money (glass is expensive), saves energy (less need for heating and cooling), and saves birds.

Lastly, I think that see-through situations (parallel glass) regardless of elevation should be treated.

I hope this helps,  
Shani

Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.  
Environmental Advocate  
Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance  
22221 McClellan Rd.  
Cupertino, CA 95014  
650-868-2114  
[shani@scvbirdalliance.org](mailto:shani@scvbirdalliance.org)



On Fri, Apr 10, 2026 at 1:56 PM Camille Leung <[cleung@smcgov.org](mailto:cleung@smcgov.org)> wrote:

Hi Shani,

Do you know if there have been study(ies) of the potential cost impacts of bird safe glass regulation to the cost of housing, or development in general? Are there any studies you can point us to?

Thanks

---

**From:** Camille Leung <[cleung@smcgov.org](mailto:cleung@smcgov.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 9, 2026 5:04 PM  
**To:** Shani Kleinhaus <[shani@scvbirdalliance.org](mailto:shani@scvbirdalliance.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: San Mateo County: Design Review Ordinance Update Project

Sure, but item was not heard; is there a new concern you wish to discuss? New date is being set. I will let you know.



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

# ATTACHMENT F

---

**From:** Midcoast Community Council <midcoastcommunitycouncil@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 27, 2026 12:29 AM  
**To:** CEO\_BoardFeedback; CEO\_SMCSUPSPEIER; Noelia Corzo; SMC\_SupMueller;  
SMC\_SupGauthier; David Canepa; Planning\_Commission; Steve Monowitz; Camille  
Leung; Marisol Escalera Durani  
**Cc:** midcoastcommunitycouncil  
**Subject:** MCC Comments on Proposed Design Review Standards Update  
**Attachments:** MCC\_DesignReview\_Comments\_20260325.pdf

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

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Dear San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commissioners, Director Monowitz, and Senior Planner Leung,

The Midcoast Community Council respectfully submits the attached comments on the proposed changes to the San Mateo County Design Review Standards. We understand the proposed update to the Design Review Standards is tentatively scheduled on the Board of Supervisors meeting agenda for April 7, 2026.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Williams, Chair  
Midcoast Community Council  
[midcoastcommunitycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:midcoastcommunitycouncil@gmail.com)

## Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar*  
PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 | [midcoastcommunitycouncil.org](http://midcoastcommunitycouncil.org)

**Kimberly Williams**  
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Vice Chair

**Gus Mattammal**  
Treasurer

**Claire Toutant**  
Secretary

**Antonio Conte**  
**Connie Santilli**  
**David Santoro**

Date: March 25, 2026

To: San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
San Mateo County Planning Commission  
Steve Monowitz, Director, SMC Planning and Building

Cc: Ray Mueller, Supervisor, District 3  
Marisol Escalera, Chief of Staff, Office of Supervisor Ray Mueller  
Camille Leung, Senior Planner, SMC Planning and Building

Subject: **Comments on the Update to Coastside Design Review Standards**

Dear San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, Planning Commissioners, Director Monowitz, and Senior Planner Leung,

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The MCC has serious concerns in regard to changes made to eliminate some standards simply because the County has neglected to enforce them, as mentioned on page 8 in the summary of updates. The County's lack of enforcement shouldn't be a basis for determining whether those standards are important or necessary. If we routinely eliminate standards where the County has "ignored" enforcement, there would be no standards remaining, therefore this explanation seems arbitrary and we ask that the

County provide a well-reasoned, documented case for these specific recommended changes.

There are several passages in section 8.256.010 ESTABLISHMENT, PURPOSE, AND LEGISLATIVE INTENT OF DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT, with language mentioning “public health, safety, comfort, convenience, happiness and welfare of the citizens”. We suggest omitting the words ‘comfort, convenience and happiness’, thereby focusing on ensuring the public health, safety, and welfare of citizens, as more objective language.

There are also concerns about E.1, where the proposed wording seems to indicate the County is encouraging builders to develop land generally. The original language, “interdependence of land value and aesthetics” actually does capture the intention. We suggest the following alternative language: “To recognize the interdependence of land values and aesthetics and to provide a method by which the County may encourage an approach to land development so that its value and attractiveness will endure.” There is data correlating land value with aesthetics, showing association with higher property values, so this language is objective, unbiased, and quantifiable.

In section 8.256.020. ESTABLISHMENT OF DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE, DESIGN REVIEW ADMINISTRATOR AND DESIGN REVIEW OFFICER, the overall structure of the Design Review Committee is unclear and should be described in the first paragraph, to explain the number of members (3) and alternates (3) for the CDRC now that the other design review committees have been dissolved. Alternates and nearest residing members are mentioned further down, but it’s not clear how this fits with the appointment process and whether alternates for the community member on the CDRC and for the professional architect members, are interchangeable. If that context can be found elsewhere, it should be referenced.

In this section also, in item A.5, having the CDRC develop and adopt its own conflict of interest code would seem to be a direct conflict of interest.

## 2) Outdoor Residential Lighting

The MCC has been requesting improved lighting standards for several years. We fully support the integration of DarkSky International's Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting into the Design Review Standards. The initial draft document specified a residential lighting Correlated Color Temperature (CCT) of 2200 Kelvin (K), which received strong support from the Midcoast community. However, just prior to the Planning Commission meeting at which these draft Standards were considered, and after the County had circulated and presented the draft document at public meetings, the County changed its recommendation to 3000 K, ignoring the strong support from the public and support of the Planning Commissioners for the limit of 2200 K originally proposed.

The MCC reviewed the proposed Design Review Standards twice, and both times received multiple comments in support of a CCT of 2200 K. Indeed, we received no comments that it should be otherwise. We are very concerned that this change doesn’t reflect what the Midcoast community has requested and has worked diligently to

research and encourage for a number of years and we ask that the 2200 K CCT standard be reinstated in the Design Review requirements to apply to both commercial and residential buildings. The community has already established a precedent on limiting to a 2200 K CCT in both our neighborhood street lights (overseen by DPW) and the El Granada Elementary School remodel (overseen by County Planning), which, in the latter case, implemented recommendations from an experienced DarkSky consultant.

Over the last several years, the Midcoast community has been impacted by a growing number of lighting issues that significantly impact quality of life, including excessively bright LED lighting that is blue-rich, light trespass, nighttime glare, sleep disruption, sky glow obscuring views of the night sky, light scatter in foggy conditions, and disruption and impacts to wildlife and domestic animals (an alpaca farm in Montara in one instance). In that time, the MCC has received many comments and complaints from those impacted by excessive nighttime lighting, and we are still receiving such complaints as recently as February of this year.

As noted in the [MCC's letter of October 9, 2024](#), in an effort to better understand the issue, we had a leading scientist in the field, [Dr. Travis Longcore](#) of UCLA, give a [presentation to the community](#) and answer questions in 2023. We have also reviewed information and recommendations from [DarkSky International](#) along with ordinances adopted by other California municipalities and counties. Based on this information and community feedback, we continue to recommend the development of a lighting ordinance for the Midcoast unincorporated areas that follows DarkSky International's guidelines and recommended best practices to address this ongoing problem. Therefore this change to the Design Review Standards is extremely important in helping us address the needs of the coastside community and to address impacts to sensitive habitats and wildlife, including shoreline habitats, marine life in the tidal zone, migratory birds, sea birds, several owl species, and sensitive ecosystems that are a part of and surround our community.

In response to comments SMC Planning and Building made about enforcement, MCC submits that the County's enforcement track record is thin and inconsistent at best, regardless of what are the stated Standards requirements. While we would like enforcement to improve, we recognize there are budget and employee capacity challenges generally. However, this is an insufficient reason to accept poorer standards. By that logic, the County would never improve any of its practices. Technology has evolved and improved. Currently lighting fixtures and lights that meet DarkSky International recommendations, including the 2200 K CCT, are widely available. This fact was pointed out by a planning commissioner during the Planning Commission meeting where these changes were considered.

Additionally, if bringing existing residences into compliance is a concern, we recommend a reasonable phase-in period (or phase-in triggers) for existing residential buildings of 3–5 years and/or some change in condition that would require the lighting be brought up to compliance, (e.g., when certain other, unrelated permit applications are applied for). Specific complaints of significant lighting impacts to neighboring properties or sensitive areas, would also trigger compliance as it does currently. As to enforcement, we don't

expect the County to conduct an assessment of all homes for compliance, but we do expect that the standard should be a tool whereby, if a complaint arises where the lighting is out of compliance, it serves as a tool to address the issue in a straightforward manner to bring it into compliance. This isn't much different from what happens now on the Midcoast. More importantly, having the recommended DarkSky lighting standard of 2200 K also ensures that any new residential buildings will be required to meet and maintain that standard as a condition of approval.

The following language could apply to address complaints: If a lighting source has been determined to be a nuisance, it may be subject to correction or redesign at the discretion of the Planning Director. Corrective actions could include requirements for shielding, filtering, redirecting, replacement of the fixture or source, removal, or a combination of these to eliminate the lighting trespass, pollution, or nuisance.

More counties and municipalities are developing and adopting modern dark sky friendly lighting policies, including most recently Humboldt County and the City of Palo Alto. The County of Ventura's lighting ordinance has a section for the Coastal Zone's specific scenic resource and sensitive habitat areas. The California Coastal Commission has also expressed strong support for dark sky friendly lighting policies. Findings in their report for Humboldt County's hearing are applicable to the San Mateo County Midcoast, citing lighting impacts to ESHA, parks, open space, and recreation areas in the County's coastal zone.

The unincorporated Midcoast is rural with limited semi-urban areas in close proximity to parks, open space, beaches, and recreation areas, and the coastal commercial areas are also situated near beach and bluff areas. In Montara, Moss Beach, and El Granada, residential neighborhoods are adjacent to federal, state, and local parks and recreation areas as well as a marine reserve. We note that the proposed update only mentions Montara as bordering park land and open space, and this should be corrected.

The DarkSky International organization is a leading authority on best practices for outdoor lighting based on science. They recommend a CCT of 2200 K as best practice to minimize negative environmental impacts. When higher than 2200 K CCT is necessary to meet lighting objectives that are exceptions, they recommend total emission of blue light into the environment should be kept as low as reasonably possible through low intensities, careful targeting, and reduced operating times.

In regard to exempt lighting, we suggest that it may only be considered exempt so long as it results in no light trespass: (1) off the property, (2) to the night sky, or (3) to any ESHA. Acceptable exemptions may include: temporary holiday decorations, fixtures that illuminate flags, but are turned off by a certain time (subject to Federal and State flag codes), string lights that have warmer color temperatures only and are turned off by 10 p.m., emergency lighting, and motion detected lighting sources that have an activation limit of 5 minutes or less and that cannot be triggered from outside the property boundary.

According to DarkSky International, blue light, including the amount of blue light from a 3000 K CCT, scatters locally in the atmosphere and is redirected back toward earth, cumulatively manifesting as sky glow. A light with 3000 K CCT contains a higher percentage of blue light, double that of a 2200 K CCT. The Coastal Commission noted that “limits designed to control light trespass including shielding, do not on their own adequately protect ESHA and parks and recreation areas from degradation, because they do not address diffuse light from non-discrete sources that accumulates in the atmosphere from the cumulative effects of higher color temperature light sources.”

San Mateo County is also part of the Pacific flyway for migratory birds. The glare and skyglow created by scattered light can disrupt navigation, particularly during inclement weather that further scatters light and affects visibility. Bird light entrapment is also now well documented.

3) Bird safe glass and anti-glare glass

In addition to reducing light pollution at night, we agree with remarks from Green Foothills that bird safe design should be incorporated in the Design Review Standards requirements. Education around bird-friendly glass that cuts down on bird collisions has become a more pressing issue as over one billion birds are killed each year from collisions with glass. As mentioned above, the County of San Mateo is in the Pacific flyway and bird-safe design standards are important across the entire County.

Also, in recent years the glare from structures that contain more glass surface area is substantial at certain times of day. Given the rise in residential projects that contain significant glass surface area, the MCC supports Design Review Standards requirements that help reduce large areas of transparent or reflective glass, and to utilize low-glare glass options in addition to e-glass and other bird safe solutions. Bird-safe and anti-glare glass should be required on all new building projects and any remodels involving large glass windows, glass doors, glass fence panels, garage doors, or other large glass surfaces.

The MCC would like to see the County demonstrate a meaningful commitment to addressing light pollution, including lighting impacts to neighborhoods, sensitive habitats and environments, wildlife, and scenic resources. Better lighting standards are a win-win for everyone and are in line with protections for coastal resources and sensitive areas. As mentioned earlier, a lighting standard of 2200 K is strongly supported by the Midcoast community and we ask the Board of Supervisors to approve Design Review Standards that include this requirement and the other policy improvements we have highlighted.

Sincerely,

Midcoast Community Council  
/s/ Kimberly Williams, Chair

---

**From:** Mercedes Segura  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2026 12:15 PM  
**To:** Kim Boverio; Sherry Golestan; CEO\_BoardFeedback  
**Subject:** FW: FW: San Mateo County: Design Review Ordinance Update Project



**Mercedes Segura**  
Administrative Assistant II

**County of San Mateo**  
Planning & Building Department  
455 County Center 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
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**From:** Camille Leung <[cleung@smcgov.org](mailto:cleung@smcgov.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2026 10:20 AM  
**To:** Mercedes Segura <[mbsegura@smcgov.org](mailto:mbsegura@smcgov.org)>; Sophie Mintier <[smintier@smcgov.org](mailto:smintier@smcgov.org)>  
**Subject:** FW: FW: San Mateo County: Design Review Ordinance Update Project

Correspondence for DR Ordinance

---

**From:** Natalie Hyland <[natalie@hylanddg.com](mailto:natalie@hylanddg.com)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 4, 2026 5:45 PM  
**To:** Camille Leung <[cleung@smcgov.org](mailto:cleung@smcgov.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: FW: San Mateo County: Design Review Ordinance Update Project

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Camille -

I am sorry I will not be able to attend the April 7th meeting. However, as we discussed in our meeting on Friday March 27, 2026 you may share this email with the board. Here is my feedback on the Design Review updates.

Hello my name is Natalie Hyland and I am a local building designer who has been designing in the County of San Mateo for over 20 years. Camille and I had a meeting on Friday March 27, 2026 about the new Design Review updates. Overall, the changes seem very fair, and as a residential designer, I can

## ITEM 7

incorporate most of the requirements into future designs seamlessly. There were a couple of items that did stand out, and they were the following:

1) Bird Glass. I understand that Bird Glass is necessary for tall structures that interfere with Bird Migration, but if I understand the new update correctly, Bird Glass is required at the guardrails of residential projects. If that is the case, could the glass guardrail, if broken up with posts/newels, be considered an exception?

2) Stucco is not a primary material. My concern here is for additions to existing Spanish-style homes. It would be great if there were an exception to existing Spanish-style homes that are already all stucco, and propose an addition that matches the existing materials.

I think those were the only two items that stood out to me.

Thank you so much for considering my feedback.

Natalie Hyland  
Founder | CEO  
Hyland Design Group

---

**From:** Dan Haggerty <midcoastdan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 7:37 PM  
**To:** Ray Mueller; Marisol Escalera Durani; Michael O'Neill  
**Cc:** Camille Leung; midcoastcommunitycouncil; Steve Terry; Melinda MacNaughton; Deborah Lardie; Mike Ferreira; Jeff Parry; musicmattershmb; Kim Evans; Thanh Vo; Dan E3M Haggerty  
**Subject:** Re: 2200k International Dark-Sky Association Board Policy as of 1-28-2021  
**Attachments:** ida\_board\_proclamation.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Honorable Supervisor Ray Mueller and staff members,

Please see below message. Sorry I did not include with original sending.

Thank you ,

Dan Haggerty

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 23, 2026, at 2:34 PM, Dan Haggerty <midcoastdan@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Camille and MCC,

As I promised I am sending the International Dark Sky Association's 1-28-21 Board Policy Declaration. Most lighting should be 2200k, according to the board policy. IDA is headquartered in Tucson, AZ.

Someday this beautiful area on the San Mateo Coastsides may economically benefit from having a DarkSky Place Certification from IDA. (see FAQ's below).

I think that we should give possibly more than 1 year to comply. This may need to be discussed further.

Please keep the 2200k standard with the 2026 recommendation of SMC Midcoast Design Review changes.

Thank you,

Dan Haggerty

**International Dark-Sky Association**  
**Board Policy on the Application of the Lighting Principles**  
**Adopted January 28, 2021**

**Whereas**, light pollution is defined by IDA as any adverse impact or effect attributable to the use of artificial light at night, including but not limited to skyglow, glare, spill light, and impaired nighttime visibility; and

**Whereas**, light pollution is known or suspected to negatively influence natural ecosystems, human health, public safety, astronomical observations, energy security, and global climate; and

**Whereas**, scientists have identified the emission of short-wavelength (“blue”) visible light into the nighttime environment as a significant astronomical and biological concern; and

**Whereas**, the Board adopted the IDA-IES Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting (hereafter the ‘Principles’) on February 27, 2020; and

**Whereas**, IDA asserts that outdoor lighting should be designed to minimize the impact on the environment; and

**Whereas**, IDA challenges lighting manufacturers, engineers, and designers to develop and advance more lighting options and positive examples in support of the Principles; and

**Whereas**, IDA sets a short-term conservation goal of no net increase in light pollution per capita and a long-term conservation goal of the restoration of intrinsic darkness; and

**Whereas**, IDA will provide guidance that can be broadly applied, empowering diverse jurisdictions, communities, and interests to select responsible outdoor lighting.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, to direct IDA’s advocacy and technical guidance on the implementation of the Principles, the IDA Board agrees as follows:

- 1) Responsible outdoor lighting must consider all five principles in its design and installation and only through attention to all five principles will light pollution be minimized to its practical extent.
- 2) Where existing fixtures are replaced, the project should demonstrate how they will reduce light pollution, or at a minimum not increase it.
- 3) Where new installation or lighting retrofit projects are proposed, they should be guided by an assessment process to determine if such lighting is necessary and responsible.
- 4) To reduce skyglow, glare, spill light, and over-lighting, indoor and outdoor lighting should contain and minimize the emission of light beyond the intended target. Light emitted towards or above the horizon can have extraordinarily high environmental impacts.
- 5) To prevent overlighting, actual illumination levels should be as close as reasonably practical to the minimum values recommended by accredited professional bodies (such as IES and CIE) and

appropriate for the task and environmental setting. IDA will collaborate with professional bodies to ensure that recommended illumination values are well-founded in science.

- 6) New installations should have active controls to reduce illumination levels or extinguish lighting completely based on time of day or occupancy. Such controls are currently underutilized in outdoor lighting and can substantially reduce light pollution and save energy. Energy conservation codes are increasingly calling for active controls.
- 7) The spectral content, or color, of light should be limited to only what is necessary for the task. Because of the disproportionate impact on the nighttime environment, particular attention should be paid to reducing the total emissions of short-wavelength or “blue” light (defined for the purposes of this resolution between the wavelengths of 380 nm and 520 nm) through light source spectrum management.<sup>1</sup>
  - a) IDA recommends that most lighting installations use lamps rated at 2200K CCT<sup>2</sup>, Phosphor-Converted Amber LED, or some filtered LEDs, based on evidence that these colors have less impact on the environment.
  - b) Where higher than 2200K CCT is selected, the total emission of blue light into the environment should be kept to as low as reasonably possible through low intensities, careful targeting, and reduced operating times.<sup>3</sup>
  - c) Near sensitive sites, such as conservation areas, sensitive wildlife habitat, ecological reserves, parks, astronomical observatories, or stargazing sites, IDA recommends that lighting installations use 0% blue light and a narrower spectrum of emission.
  - d) Critically sensitive environments should be kept naturally dark.
- 8) IDA recognizes that there is no single solution that will work for all situations; therefore IDA will develop a range of scenarios and guidance for common lighting situations. Solutions that result in no net increase in light pollution should be considered a minimum requirement, whereas best management practices would result in the maximum practical restoration of intrinsic darkness.
- 9) Because context matters, IDA recognizes that advocates and lighting professionals need the flexibility to identify how the Principles are best applied within their local area to meet valid needs while observing all regulatory frameworks (guidelines, procedures, standards and codes, and laws). Where required or feasible, such decisions should be guided by an appropriate environmental assessment and supported by monitoring of light levels in the surrounding environment.
- 10) IDA will periodically update guidelines in response to changing technology, changes in available market solutions, evolving social values, and scientific progress.

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<sup>1</sup> Outdoor light emission in the ultraviolet portion of the spectrum (below 380 nm) should also be avoided as it often has deleterious consequences for wildlife while providing no benefit or human utility.

<sup>2</sup> IDA recognizes that there is no widespread agreement on a more relevant metric than CCT for spectrum evaluation and will continue to advocate that one is developed. In the interim, CCT may be used as a placeholder, although it should be verified that the source emits no more than 8% blue light emissions.

<sup>3</sup> IDA has captured many examples of how lighting with higher blue content can be done in a responsible manner. IDA’s Community-Friendly Sports Lighting Certification is one such example.



**From:** [Shani Kleinhaus](#)  
**To:** [Camille Leung](#)  
**Subject:** Ashrae standards  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 18, 2026 2:13:24 PM

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Hi Camille, please see Ashrae standards for bird friendly design:

[https://www.ashrae.org/file%20library/technical%20resources/standards%20and%20guidelines/standards%20addenda/189\\_1\\_2023\\_o\\_20260130.pdf](https://www.ashrae.org/file%20library/technical%20resources/standards%20and%20guidelines/standards%20addenda/189_1_2023_o_20260130.pdf)

Best, shani

Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.  
Environmental Advocate  
Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance  
22221 McClellan Rd.  
Cupertino, CA 95014  
650-868-2114  
[shani@scvbirdalliance.org](mailto:shani@scvbirdalliance.org)



**ANSI/ASHRAE/ICC/USGBC/IES Addendum o to  
ANSI/ASHRAE/ICC/USGBC/IES Standard 189.1-2023**

# **Standard for the Design of High-Performance Green Buildings**

**Except Low-Rise  
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*The Complete Technical Content of the International Green Construction Code®*

Approved by ASHRAE and the American National Standards Institute on January 30, 2026; by the International Code Council on November 17, 2025; by the Illuminating Engineering Society on November 13, 2025; and by the U.S. Green Building Council on December 19, 2025.

This addendum was approved by a Standing Standard Project Committee (SSPC) for which the Standards Committee has established a documented program for regular publication of addenda or revisions, including procedures for timely, documented, consensus action on requests for change to any part of the standard. Instructions for how to submit a change can be found on the ASHRAE® website ([www.ashrae.org/continuous-maintenance](http://www.ashrae.org/continuous-maintenance)).

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**FOREWORD**

*Addendum o introduces a new requirement for bird-friendly glazing design in buildings, which is designated as a jurisdictional option. Research on bird-friendly glazing for collision prevention has guided the development of bird-friendly building design. Creating visual markers on the glass at a specific spacing and geometry to interrupt reflections and transparency has been shown to significantly reduce bird collisions. This addendum specifies requirements for the location and characteristics of this type of glass, termed “bird-friendly glazing.” Primary risk areas are addressed, including glazing in vertical fenestration, spandrel, skylights, glazed corners, fly-through conditions, and glazed railings up to 100 ft (30 m) above grade, as well as glazing adjacent to roof areas with vegetation or water features. Different options are provided for compliant bird-friendly characteristics, including glazing with a prescriptively specified pattern of visual markers, glazing compliant with the CSA A460:19 standard, or exterior attachments such as metal screens mounted over glazing. As the risk of bird collisions can vary by location due to different bird populations, migratory patterns, and local environment, this addendum is written as a jurisdictional option.*

**Informative Note:** In this addendum, changes to the current standard are indicated in the text by underlining (for additions) and ~~striketrough~~ (for deletions) unless the instructions specifically mention some other means of indicating the changes.

**Addendum o to Standard 189.1-2023**

**Modify Table 4.2 as follows.**

**4.2 Jurisdictional Options.** The jurisdictional options listed in Table 4.2 provide jurisdictions the flexibility to adopt the code in a manner that is best suited to meet their unique environmental and regional goals and needs. The informative symbol “[JO]” after the section number indicates jurisdictional option provisions.

Table 4.2 may be used for the code adoption ordinance:

- a. Where “No” boxes are provided, the jurisdiction checks the box to indicate where that section is not to be enforced as a requirement in the jurisdiction. Where the “No” box is not checked, that section is adopted.
- b. Where a numerical value is listed to specify the level of performance, the jurisdiction shall indicate the required value to be adopted. Where a numerical value is not indicated, the value in the text is adopted without change.

In addition to the jurisdictional options listed in Table 4.2, the standard also provides for optional jurisdictional adoption of Informative Appendix G, “Option for Energy Efficiency Using the IECC Prescriptive Compliance Path.” Where the jurisdiction adopts Appendix G, compliance with Sections 7.3 and 7.4 of Standard 189.1 shall be as specified in Appendix G.

**Table 4.2 Requirements Determined by the Jurisdiction (Normative in the IgCC)**

Section	Section Title, Description and Directives	Jurisdictional Requirement
<u>5.3.7</u>	<u>Bird-Friendly Design</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**Modify Section 5.1 as follows.**

**5.1 Scope.** This section addresses requirements for *building projects* that pertain to site selection, site development, mitigation of *heat island effect*, light pollution reduction, bird-friendly design, and mitigation of transportation impacts.

**Add new Section 5.3.7 as follows and renumber subsequent subsections.**

**5.3.7 [JO] Bird-Friendly Design**

**5.3.7.1 Bird-Friendly Glazing Required Locations.** Bird-friendly glazing shall be installed in new buildings and additions and where 25% or more of the vertical fenestration area is being replaced during

existing building alterations. Bird-friendly glazing compliant with Section 5.3.7.2 shall be installed in the following locations:

- a. Not less than 90% of the area of vertical fenestration, glass spandrel, and skylights below 100 ft (30 m) above grade
- b. For existing buildings, not less than 90% of the area of vertical fenestration being replaced below 100 ft (30 m) above grade
- c. Not less than 90% of the area of vertical fenestration, glass spandrel, and skylights adjacent to and within the first three stories above roof areas with vegetation or water features
- d. Where glazed, all glazed corners, fly-through conditions, glazing adjacent to courtyards, skywalks, building connectors, railings, noise barriers, and wind barriers below 100 ft (30 m) above grade

**Exceptions to 5.3.7.1:**

1. Buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
2. Places of religious worship.

**5.3.7.2 Bird-Friendly Glazing Characteristics.** Where required by Section 5.3.7.1, qualifying bird-friendly glazing shall comply with not less than one of the following:

- a. The first or second surface of the glazing shall have opaque, translucent, or ultraviolet reflective visual markers not smaller than 1/8 in. (3 mm), not more than 2 in. (50 mm) between linear continuous visual markers, and a density pattern such that a circle with diameter no more than 2.7 in. (69 mm) will fit between discrete point visual markers.
- b. Clauses 3.3.1 through 3.3.3 of CSA A460.
- c. Glazing shall be covered by permanently attached exterior building-integrated structures that do not have gaps larger than 2 in. (50 mm) in any dimension, including metal screens and fixed solar shading.
- d. Glazing shall have a bird-friendly configuration, including markers and surface orientation approved by the AHJ.

**Informative Note:** Refer to NGA DG01-21, *Best Practices for Bird-Friendly Glazing Design*, in Informative Appendix L.

**Add informative note at the end of fenestration-related items in Section 7.4.2.9 as follows.**

**Informative Note:** Refer to Section 5.3.7 regarding bird-friendly design for fenestration. Where selected as a jurisdictional option, bird-friendly glazing will be required for fenestration in specified locations.

**Modify Section 11 as follows.**

## **11. NORMATIVE REFERENCES**

Canadian Standards Association (CSA)  
178 Rexdale Blvd.  
Toronto, ON, M9W 1R3, Canada  
1-800-463-6727 and 1-416-747-4000; [www.csa.ca](http://www.csa.ca)

CSA A460:19  
Bird-Friendly Building Design  
5.3.7

**Modify Informative Appendix L as follows.**

## **INFORMATIVE APPENDIX L INFORMATIVE REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**National Glass Association**  
**344 Maple Avenue West, Suite 272**  
**Vienna, VA 22180, United States**  
**1-703-442-4890; [www.glass.org](http://www.glass.org)**

NGA DG01-21  
Best Practices for Bird-Friendly Glazing Design  
5.3.7

**POLICY STATEMENT DEFINING ASHRAE'S CONCERN  
FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF ITS ACTIVITIES**

ASHRAE is concerned with the impact of its members' activities on both the indoor and outdoor environment. ASHRAE's members will strive to minimize any possible deleterious effect on the indoor and outdoor environment of the systems and components in their responsibility while maximizing the beneficial effects these systems provide, consistent with accepted Standards and the practical state of the art.

ASHRAE's short-range goal is to ensure that the systems and components within its scope do not impact the indoor and outdoor environment to a greater extent than specified by the Standards and Guidelines as established by itself and other responsible bodies.

As an ongoing goal, ASHRAE will, through its Standards Committee and extensive Technical Committee structure, continue to generate up-to-date Standards and Guidelines where appropriate and adopt, recommend, and promote those new and revised Standards developed by other responsible organizations.

Through its *Handbook*, appropriate chapters will contain up-to-date Standards and design considerations as the material is systematically revised.

ASHRAE will take the lead with respect to dissemination of environmental information of its primary interest and will seek out and disseminate information from other responsible organizations that is pertinent, as guides to updating Standards and Guidelines.

The effects of the design and selection of equipment and systems will be considered within the scope of the system's intended use and expected misuse. The disposal of hazardous materials, if any, will also be considered.

ASHRAE's primary concern for environmental impact will be at the site where equipment within ASHRAE's scope operates. However, energy source selection and the possible environmental impact due to the energy source and energy transportation will be considered where possible. Recommendations concerning energy source selection should be made by its members.

### **Standard 189.1 and the International Green Construction Code**

Standard 189.1 serves as the complete technical content of the International Green Construction Code<sup>®</sup> (IgCC). The IgCC creates a regulatory framework for new and existing buildings, establishing minimum green requirements for buildings and complementing voluntary rating systems. For more information, visit [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org).

### **About ASHRAE**

Founded in 1894, ASHRAE is a global professional society committed to serve humanity by advancing the arts and sciences of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, refrigeration, and their allied fields.

As an industry leader in research, standards writing, publishing, certification, and continuing education, ASHRAE and its members are dedicated to promoting a healthy and sustainable built environment for all, through strategic partnerships with organizations in the HVAC&R community and across related industries.

To stay current with this and other ASHRAE Standards and Guidelines, visit [www.ashrae.org/standards](http://www.ashrae.org/standards), and connect on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

### **Visit the ASHRAE Bookstore**

ASHRAE offers its Standards and Guidelines in print, as immediately downloadable PDFs, and via ASHRAE Digital Collections, which provides online access with automatic updates as well as historical versions of publications. Selected Standards and Guidelines are also offered in redline versions that indicate the changes made between the active Standard or Guideline and its previous edition. For more information, visit the Standards and Guidelines section of the ASHRAE Bookstore at [www.ashrae.org/bookstore](http://www.ashrae.org/bookstore).

### **IMPORTANT NOTICES ABOUT THIS STANDARD**

**To ensure that you have all of the approved addenda, errata, and interpretations for this Standard, visit [www.ashrae.org/standards](http://www.ashrae.org/standards) to download them free of charge.**

**Addenda, errata, and interpretations for ASHRAE Standards and Guidelines are no longer distributed with copies of the Standards and Guidelines. ASHRAE provides these addenda, errata, and interpretations only in electronic form to promote more sustainable use of resources.**



May 12, 2026

Planning Commission  
455 County Center, 2nd Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
[planning\\_commission@smcgov.org](mailto:planning_commission@smcgov.org)

Re: Item 2. May 13 Agenda: Planning and Building. San Mateo County - Bird Friendly Design Standards

Dear Commissioners,

Green Foothills, San Mateo County Bird Alliance, and Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance support the bird friendly design standards in the updated Design Review Ordinance. We request one minor change in the wording proposed by County staff: **please remove the reference to UV-reflective coated glass**. Otherwise, we strongly support the staff recommendation and urge the Planning Commission to recommend these standards for approval to the Board of Supervisors.

The wording in question is found in subsection J of Section 8.256.170 (General Design Recommendations):

J. Use bird-friendly treatment on windows, glass railings, and other transparent exterior surfaces ("surfaces") to minimize bird strikes.

Bird-friendly treatment is defined as one of the following:

- (1) One of the following treatments applied to surfaces:
  - a) opaque 1/4" dots or 1/8" lines with 2x2" spacing;
  - b) low-reflectance opaque materials; or
  - c) non-glass double-skin facades;
- (2) Permanent patterns or coatings built into surface, such as Acid-Etched or Fritted Glass ~~or UV-Reflective Coated Glass (appears opaque to birds (who see UV light) but transparent to humans);~~ or

(3) Screens or solar shading (e.g. external blinds, shutters, or rollers that can be moved based on the sun's position).

Section 8.256.170 (J) (suggested deletions in strikeout text). This language can be found on page 57 of the staff report and draft design standards in the Planning Commission packet.

We recommend deleting the phrase “or UV-Reflective Coated Glass (appears opaque to birds (who see UV light) but transparent to humans)” because UV-reflective glass is not considered a consistently reliable treatment for preventing bird collisions under real-world conditions. Birds are generally unable to detect UV reflections on glass during cloudy or foggy conditions, or during the early morning and evening hours when bird activity is often highest. The coating may only be visible to birds under bright midday sunlight. Therefore, we respectfully urge the Planning Commission to delete the reference to UV-reflective coated glass from the draft design standards and instead rely on bird-safe treatments with demonstrated effectiveness.

### **Background: Why These Standards Are Needed**

Bird populations across North America and the Bay Area have been declining at alarming rates since the 1970s, with populations down by nearly 30 percent or 3 billion. As a critical stop in the Pacific Flyway, 300,000 to 400,000 birds land and rest on the Bay Area's shorelines each year. Our marshes and coastlines play an important role along this route, providing a space for birds to rest overwinter. Unfortunately, monitoring programs of these migratory patterns have found that birds, and most notably shorebirds, have had sharp declines in population numbers over the past twenty years. Some birds saw as much as an 87 percent decrease in population.

Scientific research consistently shows that bird collisions with glass are a major source of human-caused mortality. In North America alone, hundreds of millions of birds are killed each year due to collisions with buildings. Collisions occur wherever birds are active, not only in dense urban cores but also in suburban areas with trees, landscaping, and nearby open space. In these environments, most collisions occur at tree-canopy height, generally from ground level to about 60 feet, where birds are actively foraging and moving through habitat. Transparent and reflective glass creates the illusion of open sky or vegetation, leading birds to attempt to fly through or into these surfaces. As a result, even relatively small buildings and common features such as glass railings, corners, and fly-through designs can pose significant risks. These risks are especially pronounced near waterways, the coastline, open water, open space, and hillside areas, where bird activity is concentrated and collisions are more likely.

There is a growing list of cities that have implemented bird-friendly design standards into their policies as an attempt to mitigate bird mortalities caused by collisions with building infrastructure. San Francisco, Mountain View, Berkeley, San Jose, Palo Alto, and Cupertino are a few local examples of jurisdictions that have adopted similar design standards in order to set guidelines that protect both bird populations and development.

San Mateo County's proposed standards establish a set of reasonable guidelines and practices that would help protect vulnerable bird populations and are easily implemented. We urge the commissioners to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the staff-recommended standards for bird-friendly design, with the minor change of deleting the reference to UV-reflective coated glass.

We thank you for your time and consideration on this issue.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Mendoza  
Environmental Associate  
Green Foothills

Shan Kleinhaus  
Environmental Advocate  
Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance

Chris MacIntosh  
Chair, Conservation Committee  
San Mateo County Bird Alliance

May 11, 2026

Re: May 13, 2026 San Mateo County Planning Commission  
Agenda Item 2, File #PLN2025-00232

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Mark Dinh. I am a five year resident of the coast, a community representative on the Coastside Design Review Committee, and also a regional government employee.

First I want to commend the planning staff and community representatives from the Midcoast Community Council for all they do for the unincorporated San Mateo County area. The changes proposed in the ordinances are positive changes that will hopefully advance our community forward. I have read through the amended design review standards language and am commenting, as a resident, on the revised approach to lighting standards, specifically specifying 2200K for all projects except for existing single family residences. My concerns are summarized below:

1. I have concerns that the revised exterior lighting standard would not drive the needle forward *enough* by exempting the majority of single family residences, especially since new building permits on the coast are limited through 2027. This leaves room for existing exterior lighting to remain at the bluer, warmer ratings above 3000 kelvin. More importantly, I also feel this could lead to confusion amongst the community as to what standards apply to whom.
2. Specifying a lighting standard that is too restrictive could have unintended impacts for other regional goals such as the state and local housing element.

I recommend that the county set a single design standard, without an exemption, for exterior lighting fixtures, whether that be at 2200K, 2700K or 3000K. While my personally recommendation is at 2700K or 3000K as I feel it provides a balance between environmental impact and affordability, a consistent standard at 2200K should also be considered as originally proposed in January as I feel it will have a greater positive impact than the current proposal with the exemption.

There has been mention about the availability of light bulbs and lighting fixtures in past meetings. I am providing a few ChatGPT prompts and responses below as background information. The intent is not to discount prior research, but to provide some additional background information for consideration.

Respectfully,

Mark Dinh  
Moss Beach Resident

ChatGPT Prompt:

**what is the most common color temperature limits set by counties or cities in environmentally sensitive areas? please list these communities and their color temperature standard in a table.**

ChatGPT Response:

Yes. The dominant trend in environmentally sensitive communities is:

- **3000K max** = broad “dark sky” baseline
- **2700K max** = now the most common stricter residential/community standard
- **2200K or amber** = used mainly for highly sensitive habitats (sea turtle coasts, observatories, protected wildlife areas)

Here is a representative table of adopted or proposed standards from counties, towns, and states that specifically address environmental sensitivity, wildlife, or dark-sky preservation.

<b>Community / Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Type of Area</b>	<b>Color Temperature Standard</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Cupertino	Bird-safe / dark-sky ordinance	<b>3000K max</b>	Outdoor lighting ordinance requires ≤3000K and full shielding. ( <a href="http://cupertino.gov">cupertino.gov</a> )
Los Altos	Proposed dark-sky & bird-safe ordinance	<b>2700K max</b>	Proposed standards require outdoor lighting ≤2700K. ( <a href="http://losaltosca.gov">losaltosca.gov</a> )
Ojai Valley	Dark-sky valley / wildlife-sensitive region	Focus on shielding and dark hours; warm lighting encouraged	Ojai ordinance emphasizes downward shielding and nighttime curfews. ( <a href="http://rma.venturacounty.gov">rma.venturacounty.gov</a> )
Nantucket	Coastal dark-sky community	<b>2700K max</b> (2400K recommended)	Town guidance repeatedly recommends 2400K or lower as more wildlife-friendly. ( <a href="#">Nantucket Lights</a> )
Illinois	State lighting law	<b>2700K max generally; 2200K recommended in environmentally sensitive areas</b>	Statute specifically calls out residential areas, parks, dark-sky locations, and environmentally sensitive areas for ≤2200K. ( <a href="#">Illinois General Assembly</a> )

Toquerville	Dark-sky community near protected desert landscapes	<b>2700K required</b>	New construction exterior lighting limited to warm 2700K lighting. ( <a href="#">Toquerville UT</a> )
Escambia County Barrier Islands	Sea turtle nesting beaches	Long-wavelength amber lighting (<580nm)	Uses spectral requirement instead of Kelvin standard because turtle protection is the primary goal. ( <a href="#">MyEscambia.com</a> )
Palo Alto	Updated dark-sky ordinance	Warm-color lighting required	Ordinance aligned with DarkSky principles emphasizing warmer outdoor lighting. ( <a href="#">Palo Alto</a> )

A few important patterns emerge:

## 1. 2700K is becoming the “practical municipal standard”

Among communities actively modernizing lighting codes, **2700K appears to be the most common enforceable upper limit** for residential and mixed-use outdoor lighting.

Why municipalities choose 2700K:

- Broad product availability
- Lower cost
- Easier maintenance/replacement
- Better resident acceptance
- Significant reduction in blue light versus 3000K+

For affordable housing, this matters because 2700K products are commodity-priced and widely available.

## 2. 2200K is usually reserved for special ecological zones

Communities generally move to 2200K only when there is:

- sea turtle protection
- observatory protection
- migratory bird concerns
- highly protected habitat
- wilderness/dark-sky tourism goals

Illinois’ new statute is notable because it explicitly distinguishes:

- **2700K for ordinary residential/dark-sky applications**
- **2200K for environmentally sensitive areas** ([Illinois General Assembly](#))

That framework is increasingly influential.

### **3. Sea turtle areas often avoid Kelvin standards entirely**

Florida coastal ordinances frequently specify:

- amber light
- long-wavelength light
- spectral limits (<580nm)

instead of a Kelvin number because many nominal “2200K” LEDs still emit enough blue light to affect hatchlings. ([MyEscambia.com](#))

### **4. The industry trend is downward**

Historically:

- 4000K–5000K was common for LEDs
- then municipalities shifted to 3000K
- now many dark-sky ordinances are moving toward 2700K
- some sensitive zones are adopting 2200K or amber

DarkSky-aligned guidance increasingly treats:

- **3000K = acceptable minimum**
- **2700K = preferred**
- **2200K = best for sensitive habitat** ([Access Fixtures](#))

For your situation — balancing environmental protection with affordable housing practicality — the most common compromise standard emerging nationally is probably:

**2700K maximum for general community lighting, with 2200K reserved for ecologically sensitive subareas.**

That approach:

- aligns with current municipal practice
- minimizes cost impacts
- preserves product availability
- reduces maintenance burden
- still meaningfully reduces blue-light pollution

ChatGPT prompt:

**what is the financial impact to community and affordable housing construction if color temperature standards were set at 2200 kelvin versus 2700 kelvin or 3000 kelvin for exterior lighting**

ChatGPT response:

For **exterior lighting specifically**, the financial impact of requiring **2200K instead of 2700K or 3000K** can be substantial because exterior fixtures are more likely to use:

- integrated LEDs,
- specialty optics,
- dark-sky certification,
- municipal-grade products,
- and longer-life commercial luminaires.

That means the color temperature is often built into the fixture itself — not just a replaceable bulb.

## Short answer

For affordable housing and community-scale projects:

<b>Exterior Lighting Standard</b>	<b>Typical Cost Impact vs 3000K</b>	<b>Procurement / Maintenance Impact</b>
3000K max	Baseline	Lowest
2700K max	~0%–10%	Very manageable
2200K max	~15%–50%+	Moderate to significant

For a typical affordable housing development, a mandatory 2200K exterior standard can add approximately:

- **\$10,000–\$75,000+ per project** depending on:
  - site size,
  - parking lot lighting,
  - pathway lighting,
  - pole lighting,
  - and whether decorative fixtures are required.

For a citywide or countywide mandate, the aggregate effect across:

- multifamily housing,
  - mixed-use projects,
  - public works,
  - and streetlighting
- can become materially significant.
- 

## Why exterior lighting costs rise much more at 2200K

### 1. Exterior fixtures are usually integrated systems

Most modern exterior fixtures are:

- integrated LED luminaires,
- not screw-in bulbs.

That means:

- 2200K often requires a completely different fixture SKU,
- not just a different lamp.

Commodity 3000K and 2700K fixtures are widely mass-produced. True 2200K fixtures are still relatively niche. ([The Home Depot](#))

---

### 2. Many contractor-grade fixtures are unavailable at 2200K

This is the biggest issue for affordable housing.

Common affordable multifamily products:

- wall packs,
- soffit lights,
- corridor lights,
- canopy fixtures,

- parking lot lights,
- pathway bollards

are overwhelmingly stocked in:

- 3000K,
- 4000K,
- selectable CCTs.

True 2200K often pushes projects into:

- premium dark-sky product lines,
  - hospitality-grade fixtures,
  - custom ordering,
  - or specialty manufacturers. ([Visual Comfort & Co.](#))
- 

## Real-world pricing examples

### Example: exterior wall fixtures

A commodity outdoor fixture at 3000K or selectable CCT:

- commonly ranges around:
  - ~\$50–\$120

Comparable specialty 2200K dark-sky fixtures:

- often:
  - ~\$180–\$300+

Examples currently on the market include premium 2200K-to-3000K outdoor fixtures around \$229–\$269 each. ([Visual Comfort & Co.](#))

Meanwhile, commodity 2700K/3000K outdoor ceiling and wall fixtures are commonly available under \$60–\$100. ([The Home Depot](#))

---

## Example project impacts

# Small affordable housing project

## Example:

- 60-unit affordable housing project
- exterior fixtures:
  - 40 wall packs
  - 25 pathway lights
  - 12 pole lights
  - 20 entry fixtures

Total exterior fixtures:

~97

---

## Scenario A — 3000K standard

Commodity products widely available.

Estimated exterior lighting package:

- ~\$45,000
- 

## Scenario B — 2700K standard

Most fixtures still commodity-grade.

Estimated increase:

- +\$1,000–\$5,000

Often absorbed into normal bid variation.

---

## Scenario C — 2200K standard

Specialized fixtures required.

Estimated increase:

- +\$8,000–\$30,000+
- sometimes much more if pole lighting must also comply

That can equal:

- roughly \$130–\$500 per housing unit just for exterior lighting.
- 

## **Parking lot and street lighting create the biggest cost increases**

This is where municipal impacts become especially important.

### **Why:**

High-output outdoor luminaires are optimized around:

- 3000K,
- 4000K.

At 2200K:

- fewer optics available,
- lower efficacy,
- fewer manufacturers,
- less competition,
- higher custom-order risk.

Municipalities sometimes must:

- increase fixture count,
- increase wattage,
- or use premium optics to maintain illumination standards at 2200K.

That can significantly increase:

- capital cost,
- maintenance cost,
- pole spacing constraints.

---

# The hidden cost: procurement and replacement

Affordable housing operators are especially sensitive to:

- discontinued SKUs,
- replacement delays,
- maintenance inventory complexity.

Community discussions repeatedly note the difficulty of sourcing true sub-2700K outdoor lighting. ([Reddit](#))

This matters because affordable housing maintenance teams rely on:

- standardization,
- interchangeable products,
- local supplier availability.

3000K and 2700K align far better with that ecosystem.

---

# The energy savings difference is negligible

A very important point:

The difference in electrical consumption between:

- 2200K,
- 2700K,
- 3000K LEDs

is usually very small.

The cost issue is:

- fixture availability,
- not utility bills.

In many cases:

- a 2200K fixture may actually be *less efficient*, requiring slightly more fixtures or wattage to meet code illumination targets.
- 

## What most environmentally sensitive communities actually do

Most communities trying to balance:

- dark sky goals,
- wildlife protection,
- and housing affordability

do **not** require 2200K everywhere.

Instead they typically adopt:

Area Type	Common Standard
General exterior residential lighting	2700K
Parking areas	2700K–3000K
Pedestrian pathways	2700K
Sensitive habitat edge	2200K
Turtle-sensitive areas	Amber / spectral controls

This tiered model is becoming increasingly common because it:

- dramatically lowers project costs,
  - preserves fixture competition,
  - reduces affordable housing burden,
  - while still reducing blue-light pollution significantly.
-

# The strongest financially balanced standard

If a community wants a dark-sky / environmentally sensitive policy without heavily impacting affordable housing production, the most economically practical approach is usually:

## Recommended compromise

Application	Recommended Limit
General exterior residential lighting	2700K max
Parking lots and circulation	2700K–3000K
Wildlife-sensitive edges	2200K max
Critical habitat zones	Amber / spectral standard

This approach:

- aligns with current market availability,
  - minimizes affordable housing cost escalation,
  - avoids major procurement problems,
  - and still achieves substantial ecological benefit.
- 

## One especially important emerging solution

A rapidly growing market segment is:

- selectable-CCT exterior fixtures  
or
- warm-dim exterior fixtures.

These can:

- reduce future retrofit risk,
- allow municipalities to tighten standards later,

- and reduce inventory fragmentation.

Many contractors now prefer selectable-CCT fixtures because residents and municipalities often disagree on preferred outdoor color temperature. ([Reddit](#))

**From:** [Jeremy Levine](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Alice Kaufman](#); [Shani Kleinhaus](#); [Alexandra Mendoza](#); [Lennie Roberts](#); [Chris MacIntosh](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Agenda Item 2, rightsizing bird-safe design standards  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 12, 2026 3:35:12 PM

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Good afternoon San Mateo County Planning Commission. Jeremy Levine here writing on behalf of the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County (HLC).

HLC works with communities and their leaders to produce and preserve quality affordable homes. To that end, we support standards that promote environmentally sustainable development, balancing environmental protections with housing needs.

As written, the amended [design review standards](#)--specifically, the bird-safe glass requirements--would increase total development costs for multi-family housing without regard for cost-benefit analysis.

Earlier today, we coordinated with several environmental groups (staff cc'ed) on a solution. To improve the ordinance, we recommend exempting multi-family buildings that have glass on 40% or less of the building surface area from bird-safe glass requirements (an exemption used in the City of Palo Alto's recently approved [bird friendly design standards](#)). This amendment would ensure that only buildings with high risk of bird collisions--those with a high surface area of exterior glass--would be required to incur additional costs.

The County could implement this amendment with the following language:

*Bird-friendly treatment, as defined in Section 8.256.170 (J) or other equivalent alternative design measure, subject to approval by the Director of Planning and Building, is required on 90% of windows and other transparent exterior surfaces for:*

*(1) All new planned developments (e.g., residential subdivisions);*

*(2) Portions of new single-family ~~and multifamily~~ homes that exceed 30 feet above grade;*

*(3) Portions of multifamily housing where the building facade consists of more than 40% glass;*

*(4) New commercial, institutional, and industrial construction projects;*

*(5) Additions and existing development that replace 50% or more of the existing exterior glass shall be subject to requirements pertaining to new construction for the relevant use type as listed above.*

These amendments will ensure the ordinance achieves its intended effects to protect birds while continuing to incentivize new homes.

Thank you for consideration,  
Jeremy

--

**Jeremy Levine (he • him)**

Policy Manager

Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County

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