

Capitola Planning Commission

Agenda Report

Meeting: April 21, 2022

From: Community Development Department

Subject: Ordinance Adding Chapter 17.82 to establish Objective Standards for Multifamily and Mixed-use Residential Developments



Permit Number: 22-0126

Location: All zones with multifamily and mixed-use residential, excluding the mixed use village

Draft ordinance to establish for new objective standards for multifamily and mixed-use residential development

Environmental Determination: Categorically Exempt under Section 15061(b)(3)

Property Owner: Citywide

Representative: Ben Noble, Ben Noble Planning

Background: In 2021, the city began an effort to prepare objective standards for multifamily dwellings and mixed-use residential development. These standards are needed to protect the city and ensure quality development in light of new state housing laws. The City is using part of its SB2 grant funds for this project and is working with consultants Ben Noble and Bottomley Design and Planning on the project.

The city has held the following prior meetings for the Objective Standards project:

- Planning Commission Study Session (February 3, 2021) to present project goals and approach
- City Council Study Session (April 8, 2021) to present project goals and approach
- Stakeholder Meeting #1 (July 21, 2021) to receive preliminary input from developers, architects, and residents on potential draft standards
- Stakeholder Meeting #2 (February 16, 2021) to receive feedback on draft standards

On March 31, 2022, the Planning Commission reviewed the draft objective standards for multifamily and mixed-use residential development. The Commission provided feedback on the standards, specifically:

1. New purpose, applicability, deviations sections up front.
2. New intent statement for circulation and streetscape standards (17.82.040.A.5)
3. New landscaping standards if parking is adjacent to the street (17.82.050.b.1.b)
4. New options for entries not required to face street (17.82.060.B.3.c)

Discussion: The new objective standards would apply to all new multifamily and mixed-use residential development in the RM, MU-N, C-C, and C-R districts. The standards would not apply in the MU-V district as sufficient standards are already in place for this district. The standards

would apply to projects that require Design Review, as well as projects requesting ministerial approval under SB 35.

Standards Categories

The standards are divided into six categories:

- Circulation and Streetscape
- Parking and Vehicle Access
- Building Placement, Orientation, and Entries
- Building Massing
- Facade and Roof Design
- Other Site Features

Each category includes an intent statement to explain the purpose of the standards.

A proposed project would be permitted to request deviation from one or more standard. The Planning Commission could approve deviation upon finding that the project successfully incorporates an alternative method achieve the intent of the standard. A project requesting a deviation would not be eligible for streamlined review under SB 35.

A public review draft of the document was published on April 14, 2022. The public review draft includes revisions suggested by the Planning Commission at the March 31 meeting.

During the April 21 meeting, Ben Noble will present an overview of the updates and be available for any questions. Ultimately, if the Planning Commission does not have extensive modifications to the ordinance, the Commission may forward a positive recommendation to City Council for adoption. If the Commission has extensive changes, the Planning Commission may continue the item to the May 5, 2022, Planning Commission meeting.

CEQA: The adoption of Objective Standards for multifamily and mixed-use developments is exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3), the common sense exception that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment and 15183, projects consistent with a community plan, general plan or zoning.

Recommendation: Accept presentation on the objective standards and consider forwarding a positive recommendation on the ordinance to the City Council.

Attachments:

1. Draft Ordinance
2. Objective Design Standards Memo