

APPENDIX A

Chapter 14.77 – DESIGN REVIEW

14.77.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish criteria, objectives and procedures to be followed for design review applications in all zones throughout the City of Los Altos. Design review is used to enhance the aesthetic qualities of proposed development within the City by utilizing adopted Objective Design Standards which are supplemental to this Chapter.

14.77.020 Administrative Design Review Required.

A. Administrative Design Review.

- 1. In each of the following cases, no building permit shall be issued for the construction, addition or alteration until administrative design review approval by the development services department:**
 - a. Site improvements, exterior alterations or modifications, or additions to existing buildings of up to five hundred (500) square feet;**
 - b. Solid fences, and walls greater than six (6) feet in height.**
 - c. Additions or alterations to one-story single-family dwellings which do not exceed twenty (20) feet in height.**

14.77.030 Zoning Administrator Design Review Required.

A. Zoning Administrator Review.

- 1. In each of the following cases, no building permit shall be issued for the construction, addition or alteration until the Zoning Administrator has approved such proposal following a noticed public meeting, pursuant to this chapter:**
 - a. Any new two-story single-family dwelling;**
 - b. Any conversion of a one-story single-family dwelling to a two-story single family dwelling;**
 - c. Any new one-story single-family dwelling or accessory structure over twenty (20) feet in height;**
 - d. Any multi-family housing or mixed-use development with five (5) or fewer units;**
 - e. Site improvements, exterior alterations or modifications, or additions greater than five hundred (500) square feet of net new square footage to existing multifamily or commercial buildings;**
 - f. Whenever any of the following entitlement(s) are required by this code: subdivision map, use permit, variance, administrative modification of standards; and**

- g. Whenever the construction or expansion of a structure has special design characteristics which require additional study and consideration, as determined by the development services director or their designee.

14.77.040 Planning Commission Review Required.

In each of the following cases, no building permit shall be issued for the construction, addition or alteration until the Planning Commission has approved such proposal following a noticed public meeting, pursuant to this chapter:

- a. Any multi-family housing or mixed-use development with six (6) or more dwelling units;
- b. Any new commercial or non-residential development;

14.77.050 Exempt from Design Review.

The following improvements are not subject to Design Review:

- A. Minor modifications to existing buildings such as: replacements or modifications to windows and/or doors, new windows and/or doors, reroofing, rooftop venting, exhaust equipment, mechanical equipment, electrical improvements/upgrades, solar installations;
- B. Attached or detached accessory dwelling unit(s) and junior accessory dwelling unit(s);
- C. New dwellings proposed under the provisions of Chapter 14.64 (Dual Opportunity Developments);
- D. Detached accessory structures on properties in any R1 zoning district;
- E. Site improvements, exterior alterations or modification, or additions to existing buildings of up to one thousand (1,000) square feet in the Public/Community Facilities (PCF) District.

14.77.060 Authority of the Zoning Administrator.

The Zoning Administrator shall have the authority to require administrative design review to any improvement to a property or parcel of land that is determined to have special circumstances or potentially negative impacts on the community. A fee shall be collected for administrative design review as established by resolution of the City Council.

14.77.070 Design Review Findings.

In approving applications for design review approval under this chapter, the approving authority shall make the following findings:

- A. The proposal meets the goals, policies and objectives of the general plan and any objective design guidelines or standards and ordinance(s) adopted for the specific district or area.
- B. The proposed structures have been designed to follow the natural contours of the site with minimal grading, minimal impervious cover and maximum erosion protection.
- C. Building mass has articulated architectural elements or features that relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically. Building elevations have variation and depth and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays and balconies.
- D. Exterior materials and finishes convey high quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements. Materials, finishes, and colors have been used in a manner that serves to reduce the perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass.
- E. The design and layout of the proposed project will result in well-designed vehicle and pedestrian access, circulation, and parking.
- F. The general landscape design ensures visual relief, complements structures, provides an attractive environment, and is consistent with any adopted landscape program.
- G. Signage when proposed or required is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors, proportions, and serves as identification of the building or business(es) only.
- H. Mechanical equipment is fully screened from public view and the screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material and detailing and is in full compliance with Chapter 11.14 of the Los Altos Municipal Code.
- I. Service and trash areas are fully screened from public view or are enclosed in structure(s) that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.
- J. Street improvements which are identified in Chapter 11.20 of the Los Altos Municipal Code.
- K. Offsite improvements associated with the subdivision of land allowed by Title 13 of the Los Altos Municipal Code, and/or the Subdivision Map Act.
- L. The approval of the Development Review complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

14.77.080 Multimodal Transportation Review Required.

- A. An application for planning commission design review shall be subject to a multimodal transportation review as part of the approval process in order to assess potential project impacts to various modes of transportation such as but not limited to bicycle, pedestrian, parking, traffic impacts on public streets, and/or public transportation.
- B. Projects subject to a multimodal transportation review pursuant to this section shall be reviewed by the complete streets commission at a public meeting with the commission providing a recommendation to the planning commission on the multimodal transportation impact analysis and on the elements of the project that pertain to bicycle, pedestrian, parking, traffic and public transportation issues.
 - 1. When a multimodal transportation review is required by this code the complete streets commission shall provide their recommendations to the planning commission at a joint meeting.
- C. Exceptions. All housing developments shall be exempt from review of the complete streets commission. No multimodal transportation review before the complete streets commission shall be required of any housing development.

14.77.090 Notice of Public Meetings.

Any decisions rendered under regulations contained within this Chapter are subject to public meeting notice requirements pursuant to Section 14.01.130 of the Los Altos Municipal Code.

14.77.100 Number Public Meetings Allowed.

When public hearings are required, the number of hearings for solely design review approval shall be no more than three (3) public hearings.

14.77.110 Design Review Expiration and Extensions.

Any decisions rendered under regulations contained within this Chapter are subject to expiration and extension procedures pursuant to Section 14.01.050 of the Los Altos Municipal Code.

14.77.120 Appeal Procedures.

- A. Any decisions rendered under regulations contained within this Chapter are appealable pursuant to Section 14.01.100 of the Los Altos Municipal Code.
 - 1. The basis for any appeal of a housing development shall only be allowed and based on objective standards consistent with state law. A housing development as defined by law shall constitute any development which includes two (2) or more residential units within a proposed project.