



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 08/06/2024

ITEM NO: 21

DATE: August 1, 2024
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Review Consultant Proposal and Cost Estimate, and Provide Direction on Next Steps for Potential Revisions to the Town's Objective Design Standards

RECOMMENDATION:

Review consultant proposal and cost estimate, and provide direction on next steps for potential revisions to the Town's Objective Design Standards.

BACKGROUND:

On November 15, 2022, the Town Council adopted Objective Design Standards for Qualifying Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Residential Development (Attachment 1). Adoption of the Objective Design Standards was the culmination of a three-year effort involving the Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning Commission Subcommittee, and the Los Gatos community. Planning staff led the effort and worked with a consultant, M-Group, to write the Standards.

The preparation of the document was in response to State legislation [Senate Bill (SB) 167, SB 35, and SB 330] requiring jurisdictions to adopt objective standards and to implement them in a streamlined review of qualifying housing development applications, such as multi-family and residential mixed-use developments. Objective Design Standards are defined under State law as, "standards 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 or proponent and the public official prior to submittal" (California Government Code, Section 65913.4).

PREPARED BY: Sean Mullin, AICP
Senior Planner

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

BACKGROUND (continued):

The purposes of developing objective design standards are to:

- Comply with State housing legislation;
- Implement the State-required streamlined and ministerial review processes for qualifying housing proposals;
- Ensure that these qualifying proposals align with the Town's expectations and vision to maintain and support the character of the Town;
- Provide a set of clear criteria to guide development; and
- Establish an objective framework by which a qualifying project is evaluated.

Since their adoption, the Town's Objective Design Standards have been implemented in the review of nine qualifying pending Planning applications.

On May 7, 2024, the Town Council voted to direct staff to approach M-Group, the consultant that assisted in drafting the Town's Objective Design Standards, and ask for a proposal to work on additional standards related to view standards, architectural styles, and high-quality building design. Further, the Town Council asked that M-Group speak to their experience developing Objective Design Standards for these topics.

DISCUSSION:

In May 2024, staff contacted M-Group requesting a proposal as requested by the Town Council. M-Group's proposal is included as Attachment 2. The proposal contains initial feedback on each topic under consideration, evaluation of several jurisdictions referenced by the Town Council during the discussion on May 7, 2024 discussion, a scope of work, and a proposed budget. The proposal also speaks to M-Group's experience in drafting Objective Design Standards for the specified topics.

The proposed scope of work identifies challenges to developing Objective Design Standards for protecting views and addressing architectural styles. The scope of work includes development of additional objective standards that focus on strategic façade and massing details and a re-examination of the massing assumptions in the Town's existing Objective Design Standards.

CONCLUSION:

This agenda item has been scheduled to allow Town Council to further discuss potential work on additional Objective Design Standards and provide direction to staff on how to proceed. Staff recommends consideration of the following questions:

CONCLUSION (continued):

1. Would the Town Council like staff to prepare a request for proposals (RFP) to see if another firm(s) provides a proposal that includes view standards and architectural styles?
2. Would the Town Council like staff to work with the previous consultant (M-Group) for this effort based on the provided proposal?

Staff looks forward to the Town Council's discussion and direction.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The development of the existing Objective Design Standards involved a grant from the State for \$160,000. Most of this amount (\$121,920.90) went toward a contract with M-Group and the remaining partially offset staff time.

The proposed budget provided in the M-Group proposal is \$91,234 for their services, which does not include staff time. Staff is not aware of grants available to cover the cost of the consultant or to offset staff time for the development of additional objective standards. General Plan funds are one potential funding source for the work that the Town Council can consider.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

Attachments:

1. Objective Design Standards for Qualifying Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Residential Development, approved on November 15, 2022
2. M-Group proposal, dated June 13, 2024