

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF
SANTA MARIA, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY
COUNCIL THE ADOPTION OF OBJECTIVE RESIDENTIAL
DESIGN STANDARDS**

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Maria is a California municipal corporation and charter City (City); and

WHEREAS, the development of residential and residential mixed-use projects in the City of Santa Maria is regulated by a variety of documents including the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Specific Plans, and other topic-specific documents and plans such as, but not limited to, the City standard specifications and standard drawings, and the Active Transportation Plan; and

WHEREAS, on October 9, 2019, the Governor of California signed into law Senate Bill 330 (SB 330), also referred to as the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, which prohibits the City, when processing a residential or residential mixed-use project, from “Imposing or enforcing design standards established on or after January 1, 2020, that are not objective design standards;” and

WHEREAS, SB 330 and additional State legislation, including but not limited to Senate Bill (SB) 35 and Assembly Bill (AB) 2162, declare housing a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal affair and, therefore, apply to all cities, including charter cities. Much of the recent State legislation regarding housing includes provisions that serve to restrict or prohibit the City’s discretionary review of certain types of residential projects, which the State deems as qualified for streamlined, or subject only to the City’s ministerial review; and

WHEREAS, SB 330 defines an objective design standard as a standard that involves: “No personal or subjective judgment by a public official and is 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 before submittal of an application.” [SB 330, Section 66300(a)(7)]; and

WHEREAS, the City seeks to adopt Objective Residential Design Standards that are reflective of the City of Santa Maria, contain concise and quantifiable language that set design expectations, and foster consistent interpretation by applicants, reviewers, the City Planning Commission and the City Council, while allowing creativity in residential project design; and

WHEREAS, the Objective Residential Design Standards align with the following City objectives:

- Enable streamlined review and approval of housing, in accordance with State law.
- Ensure that buildings are appropriate to their surroundings and environment.

- Encourage a pedestrian-oriented environment.
- Emphasize high-quality, human-scaled building design and architectural elements.
- Promote thoughtful, context-sensitive residential site design.
- Maintain the livability of residential developments and enhance the character of the community; and

WHEREAS, Objective Residential Design Standards apply to residential projects which qualify for ministerial or streamlined processing per State mandate, residential development permitted ‘by right’ by zoning district, and residential projects subject to discretionary approval under the Santa Maria Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the City has held extensive public outreach in the development of the Objective Residential Design Standards including:

- Maintaining and updating a City Objective Residential Design Standards Webpage
- A Community Visual Preference Survey conducted in May 2023 for better understanding of community priorities and concerns
- Producing multiple drafts of the Objective Residential Design Standards for Public review:
 - First Draft – April 2024
 - Second Draft – November 2024
 - Third Draft – January 2025
- Holding two City Hosted Office Hours sessions for public questions and comments in May 2024
- Holding Planning Commission Study Sessions:
 - December 5, 2024
 - January 16, 2025
 - March 19, 2025
- Multiple meetings and working sessions with local housing developers; and

WHEREAS, the engagement of the public in the development of these Objective Residential Design Standards, and the adoption of the document as recommended is consistent with and satisfies the General Plan Housing Element Program 3.B; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Maria held a regularly scheduled public hearing on April 2, 2025, for the purpose of considering Objective Residential Design Standards; and

WHEREAS, notices of said public hearing were made at the time and in the manner required by law; and

WHEREAS, at the public hearing, the Planning Commission heard and considered all evidence, including evidence presented in the staff report and all written and oral testimony; and

WHEREAS, this resolution has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.), and the City's environmental procedures, and pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2), the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Additionally or alternatively, this resolution is exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Maria, that:

- Section 1. The above recitals are true and correct and incorporated herein by reference.
- Section 2. The Planning Commission recommends to the City Council that the City Council adopt the Objective Residential Design Standards as shown on Attachment A, of the Planning Commission staff report dated April 2, 2025, incorporated by reference.
- Section 3. The records of these proceedings are located in the Planning Division of the City of Santa Maria, 110 South Pine Street #101, Santa Maria, California 93458.
- Section 4. The Assistant Secretary of the Planning Commission is hereby authorized to make minor changes herein to address clerical errors, so long as substantial conformance to the intent of this document is maintained. In doing so, the Assistant Secretary of the Planning Commission shall consult with the City Manager and the City Attorney concerning any changes deemed necessary.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Maria, held this 2nd day of April, 2025, by the following roll call vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAINED:

ROBERT DICKERSON, CHAIR
Planning Commission

ATTEST:

DANA EADY, SECRETARY
Planning Commission