

## Introduction

In recent years, the State has enacted number of new laws to increase housing supply and affordability and reduce obstacles to housing production. In this effort, State law (SB 35, SB 167, SB 330, AB 678, AB 1515) has made it more difficult for jurisdictions in California to deny a multi-family housing project or decrease the density of a proposed multi-family development, unless the application fails to meet clear and objective standards defined within the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Specific Plan, or adopted design manual.

Objective Design and Development Standards (Objective Standards) provide developers and the overall community with a clear understanding of the Town's expectations for multi-family residential project design. Projects that conform to the Objective Standards are approved ministerially at the Planning counter, without discretionary review by the Planning Commission or Town Council. Since Objective Standards are requirements for design, projects that choose to apply through the Town's ministerial approval process must demonstrate compliance with each standard within the Objective Standards. Applicants who do not want to adhere to the adopted Objective Standards may still proceed through the Town's existing discretionary review process.

## How were the standards developed?

The Objective Standards process began with a work session with Town staff; interviews with stakeholders in the local housing development industry; outreach to solicit input from the community; a Planning Commission/Town Council Study Session, and a review of Town documents and design guidelines. With input from each of these sources, the Consultant Team collaborated with Town staff to create draft standards, written in objective clear language, that respect both the existing character of Windsor and the community's expectations for the future. These standards were reviewed, organized, and compiled into this Study Session Draft.

The Study Session Draft Objective Standards will be posted for public comment for a minimum of 30 days, beginning on May 27, 2021 through June 24, 2021. The Draft will be reviewed and discussed at a Joint Study Session of the Planning Commission and Town Council on June 30, 2021.

***For more information on the Project, please visit:***

***<https://www.townofwindsor.com/1266/Multi-Family-Residential-Objective-Design>***

***Please note: Simplistic interim illustrations were included as part of the Study Session Draft to help readers visualize the draft standards. The final Objective Standards will not include these but will include architectural graphic illustrations completed by Orr Design Office, who is part of the Consultant Team.***

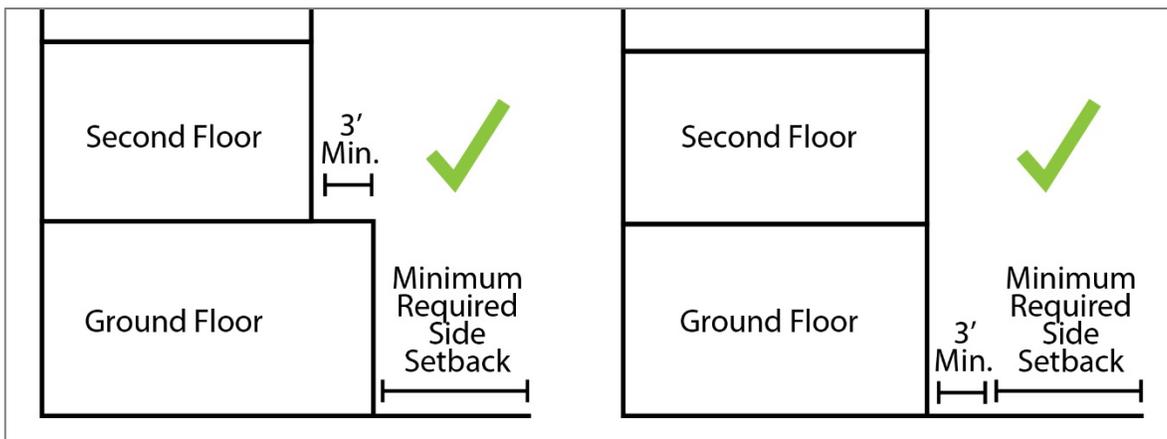
## Objective Design and Development Standards for Multifamily Residential Development

### 1. Neighborhood Compatibility

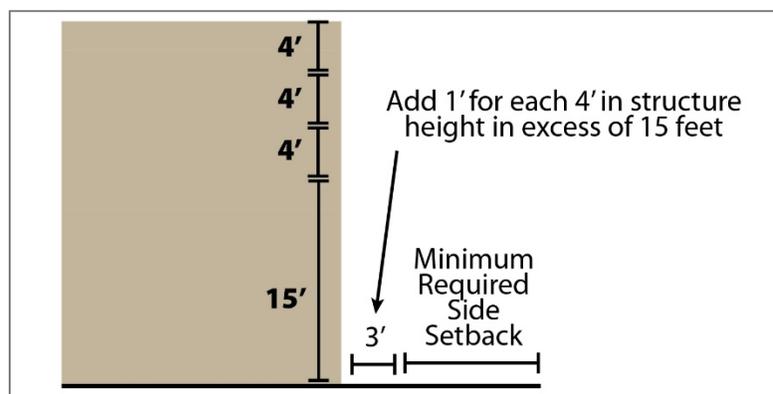
#### a. Massing

##### i. Adjacent to residential uses

1. Multi-story structures adjacent to single-family home(s), shall use a minimum of one of the following techniques along the street frontage to reduce the perceived size of the structure:
  - a. incorporate dormer windows to achieve a lower height
  - b. modulate the horizontal plane by a minimum depth of two feet at intervals of a maximum of 20 feet
  - c. articulate the roofline through change in roof pitch or inclusion of a gable at intervals of a maximum of 10 feet
2. Two- and three-story structures adjacent to single-story residential structures shall use a minimum of one of the following techniques:
  - a. step back floors above the ground floor by a minimum depth of three feet along sides within three feet of the minimum side yard setback



- b. increase the required side setback by one foot for each four feet of structure height in excess of 15 feet of total height



3. Structures taller than three-stories adjacent to residential uses shall use a minimum of one of the following techniques:
  - a. step back the walls of floors above the ground floor by a minimum of six feet from lower floor walls along street-facing frontage(s)
  - b. increase the required side setback by one foot for each four feet of structure height in excess of 15 feet of total height

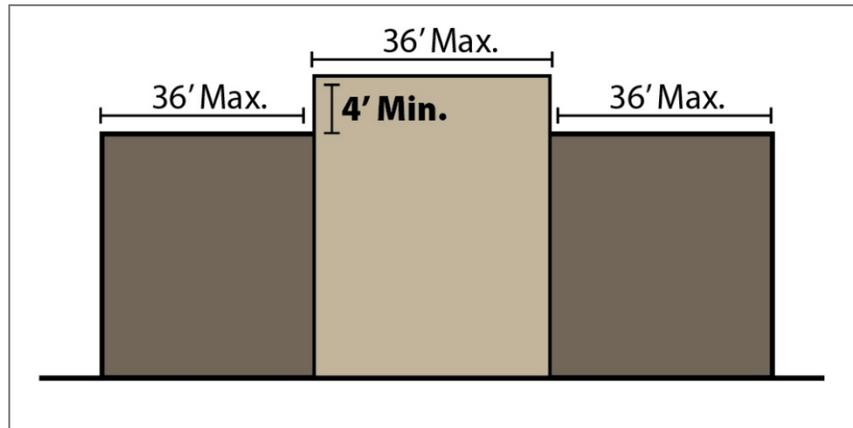
b. Orientation

1. Structures at the street shall have a front entry oriented to the street.
2. Structures that face two public streets shall provide an accessible entrance along each street.
3. Structures not at the street shall be oriented to a shared interior space<sup>1</sup>.

2. Structure Design

a. Articulation

1. Structures shall be vertically articulated by a minimum height of four feet at intervals of a maximum of 36 feet.



2. Structures shall include variations in massing and articulation on all sides facing a public street, shared interior space, or neighboring residence, including a minimum of one of the following:
  - a. awnings, balconies, porches, recesses, reveals, brackets, cornices at the roof and at the top of the ground floor, piers at corners, or structural bays
  - b. vertical articulations, including variations in height of a minimum of two feet or changes in roof-slope, at intervals of a maximum of 18 feet
  - c. horizontal articulations recessing/projecting a minimum of two feet at intervals of a maximum of 10 feet

<sup>1</sup> Shared interior spaces include, but are not limited to: Parking areas, plazas and gathering areas, driveways, paseos, and internal pedestrian space.

b. Variation

i. Variation between Adjacent Structures and Accessory Structures

1. Adjacent structure facades within a development shall differ in width or height by a minimum of four feet.
2. Adjacent structures shall not use the same primary color.<sup>2</sup>
3. Accessory structures<sup>3</sup> shall:
  - a. use roof forms, overhangs, and trim and primary colors that match a residential structure within the development.
  - b. match window types, shapes, and proportions to those of a residential structure within the development.

ii. Variation by elevation

1. Structures exceeding 30 feet in height shall not use the same combination of primary wall material and primary color on each structure elevation.

c. Fenestration

1. Windows, entryways, doors, display windows, or arcades shall make up a minimum of 40 percent of street-facing facades.
2. Windows shall be recessed a minimum of 2 inches from the exterior wall plane.

d. Structure entries

1. Structure entries at the street shall incorporate a projection (e.g., porch) or recess, or combination of projection and recess with minimum area of 50 square feet.
2. All primary structure entries shall be covered by a permanent waterproof structural element with a depth and width that is a minimum of 50 percent larger than the entry door.
3. Entryways shall be visible from the nearest street or shared interior space and shall not be separated from these areas by vehicular parking, a wall, fence, or landscaping taller than three feet in height.



<sup>2</sup> Primary color: the painted color occupying the most surface area on a structure or elevation.

<sup>3</sup> Accessory structure: any structure within a residential development that does not contain living units.

4. Paved or wooden deck surfaces that function as a porch, stoop, or unfenced patio may project up to three feet into the front setback area. These areas must be raised from the ground by a minimum of eight inches and a maximum of three feet.
- e. Street-facing façade transparency
  1. Mixed-use structures with ground floor retail shall have windows that make up a minimum of 60 percent of the ground floor frontage.
- f. Wall modulation
  1. Blank walls (walls without windows, recessed entryway or porch, or articulation) shall not exceed 20 feet in length. Walls that are not visible from public streets and neighboring residences are excluded from this requirement.
- g. Roof Type
  1. Where a flat roof is combined with a sloped roof, one of either roof type shall be constructed with an eave or a similar projection that extends a minimum of one foot from the façade and the other roof edge.
  2. Where a flat roof and sloped roof are combined on one structure, neither roof type shall be more than 75 percent of the total roofed area.
  3. Structures shall not incorporate more than two roof types.
- h. Roof Pitch
  1. Roof pitches steeper than 12:12 are prohibited.
- i. Roof Form
  - i. Eaves
    1. Pitched roofs steeper than 4:12 shall include eaves and overhangs projecting a minimum one foot from the structure wall.
- j. Sustainable design
  1. Structures shall incorporate solar or ground-source thermal capture technologies in a minimum of one of the following:
    - a. hot water system
    - b. HVAC system

### 3. Structure Materials

- a. Primary wall material<sup>4</sup>
  1. Primary wall materials shall be wood, stone, concrete, fiber cement, brick, or stucco. Additionally, engineered wood and manufactured stone products designed to resemble real wood or stone are permitted. Sustainable<sup>5</sup> materials allowed under the California Building Code are also allowed.
  2. Decks, carports, and other accessory structures shall use the same materials as a residential structure within the development.
  3. Metal shall not cover more than 25 percent of the surface area of any structure elevation.

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<sup>4</sup> The primary wall material is the siding material that occupies the greatest area of a structure face or elevation.

<sup>5</sup> Sustainable materials: materials that are locally-harvested, sustainably grown, made from naturally renewable materials, biodegradable, or free of toxins.

- b. Secondary and accent materials
  - 1. Acceptable secondary building materials include: wood, concrete, brick, stone, natural materials, engineered wood, and manufactured stone. Sustainable materials allowed under the California Building Code are also allowed.
  - 2. Secondary wall materials and accent materials shall be required on all structures and shall be visible on a minimum of 15 percent and a maximum of 30 percent of structure façade (excluding roofing).
  - 3. Polished metal and reflective glass shall only be used as accent materials. These products combined shall be visible on a maximum of five percent of the surface area of any structure elevation.
- c. Windows and doors
  - 1. Mirrored glass and glass block are prohibited. Obscured glass windows shall only be used to provide privacy along sides facing neighboring residences.
  - 2. To create facades with rich shadow lines and textures, windows and doors shall be trimmed with metal or wood/wood composite materials. Trim shall be a minimum width of three inches and shall protrude from the wall plane by a minimum of three-quarters of an inch. Windows and doors installed with the exterior glass surface recessed by a minimum of three inches from the face of the exterior wall finish material are excluded from this requirement.

#### 4. Connectivity and Parking

- a. Vehicular Circulation
  - i. Access points
    - 1. Interconnectivity
      - a. Parking areas shall be internally connected and shall use shared driveways within the development<sup>6</sup>.
  - ii. Parking
    - 1. Location
      - a. Parking areas shall not be located between a street-facing structure frontage and the street-facing property line.
      - b. Developments with more than 20 units shall provide multiple parking areas, in lieu of a single parking area.
    - 2. Screening
      - a. Parking areas visible from the street shall include a landscaped buffer including a planting strip; a screening feature, such as a hedge, that is approximately three feet high; and trees planted (on average) every 30 feet. Trees, hedges, and shrubs shall be classified as Very Low (0-0.1) or Low (0.1-0.3) in the Water Use Classification of Landscape Species Classification System

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<sup>6</sup> This standard applies only within the development. Developments are not required to share driveways with neighboring properties.

(WUCOLS) and shall be of evergreen variety to provide screening throughout the year.

3. Landscaping/shade

- a. One shade tree shall be planted for every five parking spaces. A minimum of 50 percent of the trees shall be deciduous, as they provide shade in the summer and sun in the winter.
  - i. Covered parking areas with solar capture technology are exempt from this requirement.

b. Pedestrian/Bicycle circulation

- 1. All structures, facilities, parking areas, amenities, and common areas shall be internally connected by pedestrian pathways.
- 2. Pedestrian pathways shall be separated from parking areas by landscaping, curbs, or other edge treatments.
- 3. Pedestrian pathways shall be directly connected to adjacent public sidewalks on each street frontage.

**5. Open Space and Common Areas**

a. Open space requirement

- 1. Developments shall provide open space as follows:
  - a. Compact Residential and Mixed Use Zones: Minimum 75 square feet per unit
  - b. High Density Residential: Minimum 125 square feet per unit
  - c. Medium Density Residential: Minimum 200 square feet per unit
- 2. Required open space may be any combination of common open space amenities accessible to all project residents, or private open space for the exclusive use of a single dwelling; however, no unit shall have less than 50 square feet of private open space when it is provided by a deck or balcony, or 100 square feet with minimum dimensions of 10 feet when provided by a yard at ground level. Porch areas can apply toward these requirements, but driveways and service areas shall not be counted as applying.
- 3. A minimum of 50 percent of the total units shall include private open space in the form of a balcony, porch, or rooftop garden with a minimum of 50 square feet of usable space. These areas shall be counted toward the open space area requirement.
- 4. Common open spaces shall be at grade-level or located on a roof top. Covered structures may be included if they are open on a minimum of three sides.

b. Required Amenities

- 1. One amenity shall be provided for each 10 units or fraction thereof.
- 2. Developments with more than 15 units shall provide either a paved multi-use area with fixed/built-in seating or a playground/tot lot area as one of the on-site amenities.
- 3. Developments with more than 20 units shall provide a minimum of one playground/tot lot area and a paved multi-use area with fixed/built-in

seating. Developments that will not house children, such as senior living facilities, are exempt from the playground requirement.

4. Developments with 60 units or more shall provide a minimum of three paved multi-use areas with fixed/built-in seating that are distributed within the project.
5. Approved amenities are outlined as follows:
  - a. Amenity options for all developments:
    - i. Active recreational facilities (spaces, fields, courses, or equipment used for recreational activity) with a minimum area of 400 square feet
    - ii. Passive recreation facilities (paseos, plazas, or shaded seating areas used as gathering spaces) with a minimum seating capacity for eight persons and a minimum of one feature element<sup>7</sup>
    - iii. playground or tot lot with a minimum of three structured play modules (i.e. slide, swing, and climber) and an adjacent bench or sitting area
    - iv. community or rooftop garden (minimum 400 square feet)
    - v. lounge or media room (minimum 400 square feet with minimum seating capacity for eight persons)
    - vi. commissioned public art
  - b. Additional amenity options for HDR and MDR:
    - i. outdoor games (i.e. garden chess) occupying a minimum of 400 square feet
    - ii. dog park with a minimum of two benches
    - iii. picnic areas with a minimum of two tables with seating
  - c. Additional amenity options for CR and MU:
    - i. private balconies (a minimum of 80 percent of units with a minimum of 50 square feet of usable space)
    - ii. water feature with gathering space
    - iii. bike repair station, fully-enclosed bike lockers or secured indoor bike storage
- c. Safety (CPTED)
  1. To provide "eyes on the street" surveillance, the largest window or group of windows of a minimum of one of the following rooms shall view the street: living room, dining room, family room, or kitchen.
  2. Units not facing the street shall be oriented to provide visual access to structure entries, pedestrian pathways, recreation areas, and common facilities from dwelling units.

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<sup>7</sup> Feature elements include, but are not limited to, barbecues, firepits, commissioned public art, water features, or picnic tables.

3. Drainpipes, parapets, and ledges shall not be located within three feet of windows, corridors, and balconies. If such placement is not feasible, they shall face parking lots, public spaces, and roads.

## 6. Landscaping

### a. Space requirements

1. All pedestrian pathways shall be landscaped with shade trees at intervals of a maximum of 30 feet on average. A minimum of 50 percent of the trees planted shall be deciduous, as they provide shade in the summer and sun in the winter.
2. Common space areas, structure entries, and pedestrian pathways shall be landscaped with defined edges.

### b. Plant selection

#### i. Plant and groundcover selection

1. Landscaping plans shall comply with each standard held within the Prescriptive Compliance Option of the Town's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (Windsor Municipal Code Title XII, Chapter 3, Article 9; 12-3-927).
2. Plants classified as Low-Water Use (plant factor of 0.1-0.3) or Very Low-Water Use (plant factor of 0.0-0.1)<sup>8</sup> shall be used for a minimum of 75 percent of the plant area, excluding edibles and areas using recycled water, as required by the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (12-3-927b4).
3. All tree plantings shall be a minimum size of 15-gallon at the time of planting.

### c. Conservation

#### i. Water-saving technology

1. All landscaped areas shall include irrigation systems that comply with the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (12-3-927b6).

#### ii. Existing mature trees, creeks, etc.

1. Existing mature trees shall only be removed with an approved Tree Removal Permit as outlined in the Town of Windsor Tree Technical Manual.
2. Landscaping plans must comply with Section 27.36.040 – Protected Trees of the Town's Zoning Ordinance.

## 7. Lighting Design

### a. General Provisions

1. All pedestrian pathways, parking areas, structure entries, trash and refuse enclosures, and common space areas shall be illuminated for safety and security.
2. All lighting shall be fully-shielded and directed downward.
3. Lighting shall not spill beyond the intended area and shall not extend across a property line.

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<sup>8</sup> As defined by the Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) published by the University of California Cooperative Extension and the Department of Water Resources, 2014.

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4. Lighting shall use light emitting diodes (LEDs) and shall have a color temperature of a maximum of 3000 Kelvins.
- b. Pedestrian pathways
  1. Lighting along pedestrian pathways shall not exceed eight feet in height.
- c. Parking areas
  - i. Vehicular parking
    1. Lighting in parking areas shall not exceed 16 feet in height.
  - ii. Bike parking
    1. Bicycle parking areas shall be illuminated.
- d. Signs
  1. Gateway entry signs, directional signs, and unit and structure identifiers shall be externally illuminated for visibility at night.
  2. Backlit, internally illuminated, and halo signs are prohibited.

## 8. Fences, Walls, and Hedges

- a. Location
  1. A fence or masonry wall with a minimum height of six feet and a maximum height of seven feet shall be provided along the rear and side property lines adjacent to residential uses. Side fences are not required to extend beyond a point two feet behind the front façade. Fences that extend beyond this point shall be stepped down to a maximum height of three feet.
    - a. Exceptions to this property line fence requirement may be made with the written consent of the adjacent property owner.
- b. Materials
  - i. Fences and Walls
    1. Fences or walls shall be constructed of wood, masonry, metal, stone, or faux wood composite fencing, except as described in section c.2. below.
- c. Disallowed materials
  1. Chain link is prohibited.
  2. Masonry walls consisting exclusively of smooth-surfaced concrete masonry units are prohibited.

## 9. Signs

- a. Entryways, structure addresses, amenities, and individual units shall be identified with signage. Developments with more than one structure containing dwelling units shall also include directory signs in parking areas and along pedestrian pathways. All signs shall comply with Chapter 27.32 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- b. In addition to signs prohibited by Section 27.32.040 of the Zoning Ordinance, signs with raceway channel letters are prohibited.

## 10. Utilities and Service Areas

- a. Utilities
  - i. Location
    1. Ground-mounted utility boxes, transformers, lines, utility meters, fire line detector check valves, backflow preventers, and mechanical equipment shall be located to the side or rear of structures.

