

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2026-

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HOLLISTER, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL ADOPT THE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR MULTI-FAMILY AND RESIDENTIAL MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN MIXED USE (DMU) ZONING DISTRICT.

WHEREAS, the City of Hollister (“City”) is responsible for regulating land use and development in a manner consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and applicable State law; and

WHEREAS, recent State housing legislation – including Senate Bill 35, Senate Bill 330, Assembly Bill 2011, and the Housing Accountability Act (Government Code §65589.5) – requires cities to apply objective design and development standards to qualifying housing projects, and limits that use of subjective or discretionary design review criteria; and

WHEREAS, Objective Design Standards provide measurable, predictable, and clearly defined design expectations that can be applied uniformly to residential and mixed-use development, thereby improving transparency, reducing processing time, and ensuring compliance with State housing mandates; and

WHEREAS, City staff has prepared a set of Objective Design Standards applicable to multi-family and residential mixed-use development projects, intended to ensure high-quality design while maintaining compliance with State law; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Objective Design Standards are consistent with the City of Hollister General Plan, including goals related to housing production, community character, and high-quality urban; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed Objective Design Standards at a duly notice public hearing held on Thursday, March 26, 2026, received public testimony, and considered all written and oral comments; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of the Objective Design Standards is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) because the standards do not authorize development or result in a physical change to the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed Objective Design Standards will improve clarity in the development review process, support the City’s housing goals, and ensure compliance with State housing law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Hollister hereby recommends that the City Council adopt the Objective Design Standards attached hereto as Exhibit “A”, and direct staff to incorporate the standards

into the City's development review procedures and Zoning Ordinance, subject to the following findings:

1. **CEQA.** The Planning Commission finds the Objective Design Standards is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it constitutes an administrative action that does not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change to the environment and therefore does not qualify as a "project" under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).
2. **Implementation of Housing Element.** The Planning Commission finds, and recommends that City Council find, that the proposed Objective Standards ("ODS") are consistent with the adopted 2023-2031 Housing Element and the adopted General 2040 General Plan. Both documents include goals, objectives, policies, and actions that emphasize high-quality design, streamlined housing production, and the creation of safe, attractive, and well-connected neighborhoods. The ODS directly implement these adopted policy alternatives.

The ODS are consistent with the following Housing Element goals and policies:

- Housing Goal H1 – Work together to build a sense of community and achieve housing goals

Policy H1.5: Senate Bill 35 Streamlining.

This policy requires the City to maintain written procedures to comply with Government Code Section 65913.4 and to process qualifying projects with at least 50 percent affordable units through the streamlined ministerial review process established under SB 35. During any period in which the City is subject to SB 35 streamlining, qualifying projects must be reviewed solely for compliance with objective standards, including the ODS and applicable Building and Fire Codes. Such projects cannot be subject to discretionary review or public hearings, and parking requirements are limited to the reduced ratios specified in SB 35. The ODS provide the objective, measurable criteria necessary to implement this policy.

- Housing Goal H2 – Maintain and enhance existing neighborhoods and blend well-designed new housing into neighborhoods and communities.

Policy Action H2.1: Objective Design Standards.

This action directs the City to establish and implement Objective Design Standards and to update design review procedures to facilitate streamline development. The ODS fulfill this adopted policy by providing clear, quantifiable design requirements for multi-family housing projects, ensuring consistency, predictability, and high-quality design outcomes.

3. **Implementation of General Plan.** The ODS are also consistent with the adopted Hollister 2040 General Plan, which includes goals and polices across multiple

elements that emphasize high-quality design, orderly development, and enhanced walkability.

The ODS also directly implement the following General Plan goals and actions:

- Land Use and Community Design Element – Goal LU- 16
“Maintain and enhance Hollister’s small-town charm and identity by ensuring that new development is attractive and of high quality.”

Action LU-16.1 directs the City to develop citywide design guidelines and/or objective design standards for residential, commercial, and industrial uses, including standards for streetscape improvements such as decorative lighting, enhanced crosswalks, gateways, and additional landscaping. The ODS implement this action by establishing clear, objective design expectations for multi-family housing within the Downtown.

- Land Use and Community Design Element – Action LU-2.4: Multifamily Design Standards. “Develop a set of multifamily design standards to review new projects in multifamily zoning districts and update as necessary to reflect the growing needs of the City to ensure high-quality design continues to be provided.

The ODS directly implement this action by creating a comprehensive, objective, and measurable set of design standards specifically tailored to multi-family housing development. These standards ensure that new multi-family projects meet the City’s expectations for high-quality architecture, site planning, and compatibility with surrounding development.

- Land Use and Community Design Element – Action LU-3.2 Design Standards. “Develop a set of design standards to review new projects in mixed-use zoning districts, and update as necessary to reflect the growing needs of the City.

The ODS implement this action by establishing objective criteria for mixed-use residential development in the Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) zoning district.

For the above reasons, the Planning Commission finds that adoption of the Objective Design Standards is consistent with opted Housing Element and General Plan. The ODS establish clear, numeric, and quantifiable design requirements that can be measured objectively, rather than subjective standards and quality of design within the City, supports the production of new housing, and streamlines the approval of qualifying projects. Therefore, the proposed zoning code amendments will not adversely affect public health, safety, or general welfare.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, at the regular meeting of the City of Hollister Planning Commission held of the 26th day of March 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAINED:

ABSENT:

Chairperson of the Planning Commission
of the City of Hollister

ATTEST:

Eva Kelly, Secretary