CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Presentation of Proposed Amendments to GMC Chapter 30.11 Residential Districts Regarding Multi-Family Zoning Standards and Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family Residential Development

1. Motion to provide direction on the proposed concepts for multi-family zoning amendments and objective design standards and to proceed with finalizing the standards for presentation to the Design Review Board and Planning Commission prior to returning to City Council for Introduction.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Report

Approved for November 14, 2023 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff is presenting a variety of new site planning and massing concepts for multi-family development for Council's review and comment. Based on Council's feedback and following public outreach, staff will prepare code amendments to be brought before the Design Review Board and Planning Commission prior to returning to City Council for introduction.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide comments on the proposed amendment concepts and objective design standards for multi-family residential development and direct staff regarding continued preparation of final draft amendments to Chapter 30.11 Residential Districts for consideration in early 2024.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

As part of the SB 2 Grant program, staff has been working with Crandall Arambula (consultant) to prepare and implement objective design standards for all multi-family residential projects, with modifications to the zoning and development standards. Such updates were recommended by City Council, based on public comments that currently, the existing multi-family standards often do not allow for developments to reach their maximum density potential, especially in the High Density R-1250 Zone. Development-limiting standards include: the current minimum interior setbacks, which result in a

“wedding cake” massing; the two-story height limit for site less than 90 feet in width; and common open space requirements that often result in overlooked, unused pocket areas, etc. Modifying the development standards will increase that likelihood of achieving housing unit potential, while also increasing certainty in the review process and ensuring livability and design compatibility within existing neighborhoods.

Objective design and development standards (e.g., those based on numerical criteria) for review of multi-family housing applications are more straightforward for applicants and are also consistent with the following recent State legislation:

- SB 35 Streamlined Affordable Housing - Requires approval of qualified housing projects based on objective regulatory standards.
- SB 167 Housing Accountability Act - Local governments may not deny, reduce density, or make infeasible housing projects consistent with objective design standards.
- SB 330 Housing Crisis Act of 2019 - Prohibits imposing or enforcing new design standards established on or after January 1, 2020, that are not objective.

Much of this legislation focuses on objective design and development standards to help address the housing shortage within the State. Currently, design guidelines are used to assess projects, and these guidelines can be “subjective”, requiring personal interpretation of their meaning and application. This interpretation, in turn, can lead to a lengthy project review and approval process, and uncertainty for project applicants. The intent of new State housing laws is to streamline the review process for multi-family residential projects to increase housing production and decrease costs. Objective design standards would ensure a more efficient, predictable, and equitable path to obtaining and granting planning approvals for a wide variety of development projects, especially for affordable housing projects. Such objectives standards are also a powerful tool that allow communities to respond to State housing laws that are reducing local control of development and to provide an opportunity to ensure that the appearance of new development is compatible with the City’s vision for multi-family neighborhoods.

The proposed objective standards consist of two parts: code amendments to the development standards for multi-family residential zoning and objective design standards for multi-family development. The first part, code amendments to the multi-family residential development standards, focuses on updates to existing residential district general development standards table:

GMC 30.11.030, Table 30.11-B

Development Feature	**Requirement by Zoning District**			
	R-3050	**R-2250**	**R-1650**	**R-1250**
Minimum Lot Size	**Minimum lot area and width required**			
Area/Width	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Residential Density Maximum	1 dwelling unit per 3,050 sq. ft. of lot area.	1 dwelling unit for each 2,250 sq. ft. of lot area. On lots having a width of 90 feet or greater, there shall be not more than 1 dwelling unit for each 1,800 sq. ft. of lot area.	1 dwelling unit for each 1,650 sq. ft. of lot area. On lots having a width of 90 feet or greater, there shall be not more than 1 dwelling unit for each 1,320 sq. ft. of lot area.	1 dwelling unit for each 1,250 sq. ft. of lot area. On lots having a width of 90 feet or greater, there shall be not more than 1 dwelling unit for each 1,000 sq. ft. of lot area.
Floor Area Ratio Maximum	.65	.85	1.0	1.2
Lot Coverage (2)	50% maximum including all residential and accessory buildings			
Setbacks Required (2)	See Section 30.11.070 for setback exceptions			
Street Front	25 feet minimum	20 feet minimum and an average of 23 feet for any garage or first residential floor; not less than 23 feet and an average of 26 feet for the second and third residential floors (see Diagram 1 in Figure 30.11.030).		
Street Side	5 feet minimum and an average of 8 feet for the first residential floor; not less than 8 feet and an average of 11 feet for the second residential floor; and not less than 11 feet and an average of 14 feet for the third residential floor (see Diagram 2 in Figure 30.11.030).			
Interior	5 feet minimum and an average of 8 feet for the first residential floor; not less than 8 feet and an average of 11 feet for the second residential floor; and not less than 11 feet and an average of 14 feet for the third residential floor (see Diagram 2 in Figure 30.11.030). (1)			
Interior when abutting the ROS, R1R or R1 zones (excluding chimneys, railings and vents)	8 feet minimum and an average of 11 feet for the first residential floor; not less than 11 feet and an average of 14 feet for the second residential floor; and not less than 17 feet and an average of 20 feet for the third residential floor (see Diagram 3 in Figure 30.11.030). (1)			
Height Limits (2)(6)	Maximum of 3 stories and a maximum of 36 feet. (3) (4) (5) On lots having a lot width of 90 feet or less, a maximum of 2 stories and a maximum of 26 feet. (3) (4) (5)			
Accessory Buildings	12 feet, or 15 feet where a minimum roof pitch of 3 feet in 12 feet is provided, pursuant to the definition of height set forth in this title.			
Accessory Structures	15 feet pursuant to the definition of height set forth in this title.			
Minimum Permanently Landscaped Open Space (2)	30% of lot area. See Chapter 30.31 for additional requirements	25% of lot area. See Chapter 30.31 for additional requirements		
Parking and Loading	As required by Chapter 30.32 (Parking and Loading)			

Notes: (1) For additions to existing dwelling units where only one (1) dwelling unit exists on the lot and for which a building permit was issued prior to December 14, 1995, see Section 30.11.070.
(2) For lot coverage, setback, height, and landscape open space requirements, see Section 30.30.050.
(3) Additional five (5) feet of height shall be permitted for any roofed area having a minimum pitch of three (3) feet in twelve (12) feet.
(4) Rooftop equipment shall not be included in the measurement of the vertical dimension provided that said equipment is fully screened by a roofed element of the building having a minimum pitch described herein.
(5) A mezzanine shall not be considered a story. See Chapter 30.70 (Definitions).
(6) For exceptions to height limits for wireless telecommunications facilities, see Chapter 30.48.

DENSITY:

No changes are proposed to the existing density (dwelling units per acre) limits.

Current density limits for the R-2250, R-1650 and R-1250 zones depend on the lot width. For lots 90 feet or less in width, the density is one unit per 2,250, 1,650

or 1,250 SF of lot area, respectively. For lots greater than 90 feet in width, an increased density is permitted – up to 24 du/ac in R-2250 (Medium Density Residential), 33 du/ac in R-1650 (Medium High Density Residential), and 43 du/ac in R-1250 (High Density Residential). In order to incentivize lot consolidation, more units within a larger project are allowed on a larger lot. Based on the Density Bonus provisions and State law, additional density up to 50% is permitted depending on number of affordable units and levels of affordability.

FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR):

No changes are proposed at this time. Additional FAR is allowed for projects of three to 10 units, per State statute (SB 478) and GMC 30.11.050.K. Density Bonus projects may request to exceed the FAR limits.

LOT COVERAGE:

The existing 50% limit is appropriate for smaller scale projects in the R-3050 (Moderate Density) and R-2250 (Medium Density) zones that are typically adjacent to single family zones. The lot coverage in the R-1650 (Medium High Density) and R-1250 (High Density) zones could be slightly increased to permit greater maximization of the lot for residential development. For example, Burbank allows for 60% for lots located within 500 feet of a single family zoned property and 70% for lots located greater than 500 feet. Staff is considering increasing the lot coverage limit for the higher density districts.

SETBACKS

The existing standards, often criticized for resulting in “wedding cake” massing, will be updated to not require different minimums and averages on each residential floor. Instead, uniform setback minimums and averages on all floors will be proposed for the interior, street front and side street elevations. Such uniform minimums will be layered with the objective design standards to ensure articulation across the elevations and varying depth in building massing. Additional setbacks and an increased setback for the upper floor will be required for projects abutting single family zones.

HEIGHT

The current standards limit development to two stories and 26 feet in height for lots less than 90 feet in width (same width threshold as for density), and three stories and 36 feet in height (with additional five feet for sloped roofs) on lots greater than 90 feet in width. To address the State’s requirements for Glendale’s adopted Housing Element, the two-story height limit is being eliminated; all multi-family residential projects will be allowed three stories by right. Staff is proposing an upper floor step-back requirement for all floors above the second floor for projects adjacent to single-family zones to ensure appropriate transitions between multi-family and single family zones.

MINIMUM LANDSCAPING

Currently, 25% of the lots in the R-1650, R-2250 and R-1250 must be landscaped. This standard may be updated to specify the percentage amount of the required common open space that must be landscaped. See section below.

OPEN SPACE

Currently, 40 square feet (SF) of private open space and 200 SF of common open space must be provided for the first 25 dwelling units on a lot, with 150 SF of common space for the second 25 units on a lot, and 100 SF of common open space for each unit above 50 units. No change is proposed for the 40 SF private open space requirement. For projects with six (6) or fewer units, staff is proposing that 200 square feet of private open space per unit may be provided in lieu of providing separate 200 SF of common and 40 SF of private open space per unit. Such private open space must comply with private open space requirements and need not comply with common open space requirements. Also, new site planning concepts described below as part of the site planning objective design standards concentrate on locating the common open space on the ground floor to achieve building separation and break down building massing. These new concepts also modify the way open space requirement is currently calculated by shifting away from a fixed number of square feet per unit to a percentage of the lot area on the ground floor.

OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

The objective design standards will be similar to the formatting/regulations in the Tropico Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning and the Downtowns Specific Plan (DSP), while the existing design guidelines for multi-family development (Comprehensive Design Guidelines: https://www.glendaleca.gov/government/departments/community-development/planning/design-guidelines), specifically Chapter 5 – Multi-Family and Mixed Use, provide the starting point for staff's study. The existing City-adopted guidelines language will be converted to design standards by modifying the subjective language applicable to site planning, massing & scale, and design & detailing sections to objective language, wherever possible. As per State law, however, only objective design standards will be included in the proposed updates.

One of the main goals for this report to is to solicit Council's feedback on several new site planning and massing concepts. These concepts will be presented in detail during the PowerPoint presentation to City Council.

In summary, the proposed concepts are based on the existing 90-foot lot width threshold for densities. Applicants/developers can either apply the new standard, uniform minimum/average setbacks ***OR*** select an interior courtyard ("Courtyard Option"). Each of these options would have specific standards for building setbacks, amount of common open space amenity area (COSA), and access dimensions.

Depending on the "Condition" (Condition 1 - lot width less than 90 feet, or Condition 2 –

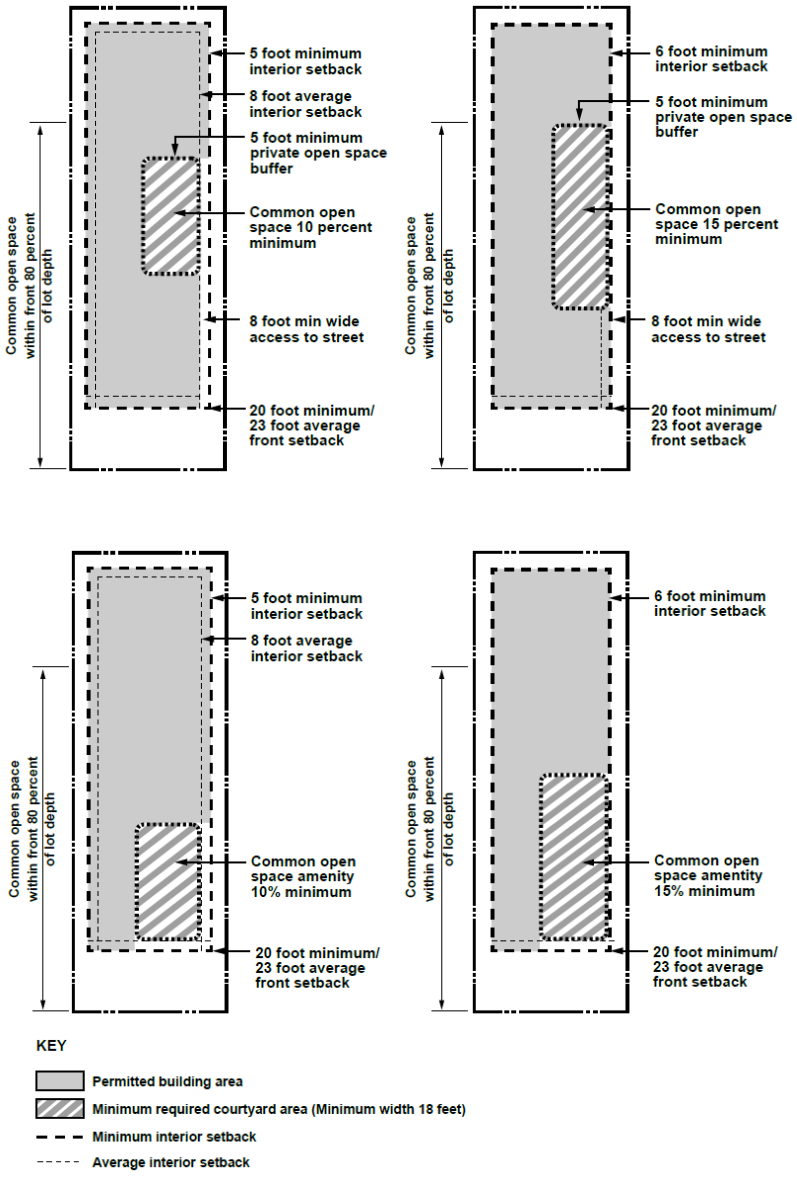
lot width 90 feet or greater), and the chosen “Option” (Standard Setbacks Option or Courtyard Option), the multi-family residential project would have to comply with the applicable development standards, as well as the additional objective design standards related to massing/scale and architectural detailing. Standards for massing would regulate modulation of the building both vertically, in terms of height, and horizontally, resulting in recesses/projections across a façade elevation. Objective design standards for materials, fenestration (doors and windows), etc., for architectural detailing would also apply.

The consultant prepared models to assess the appropriateness of the development and design standards and viability of the proposals. The diagrams illustrate two conditions for lot sizes less than 90 feet in width and greater than 90 feet. The actual dimensions shown are for typical lots in Glendale, 50 x 150 feet and 100 x 150 feet. The massing models show that the proposed concepts are feasible, workable, and at the same time allow applicants to maximize the number of residential units on multi-family zoned lots.

The diagrams on the next few pages illustrate the site planning and massing concepts for two lot width Conditions and the open space/setback Options.

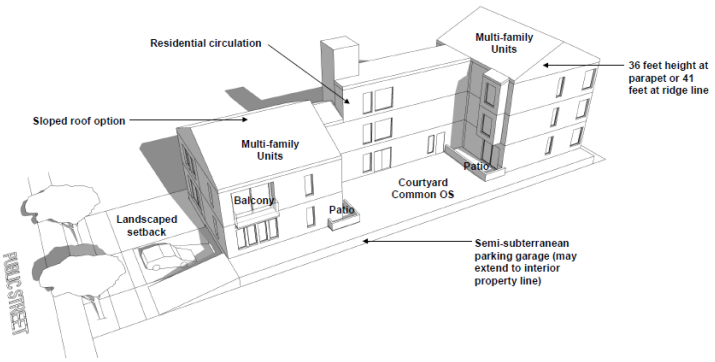
Condition 1 – Lot width 90 feet or less

Option 1 - min/ave setbacks w/ 15% COSA Option 2 - fixed setback with 15% COSA

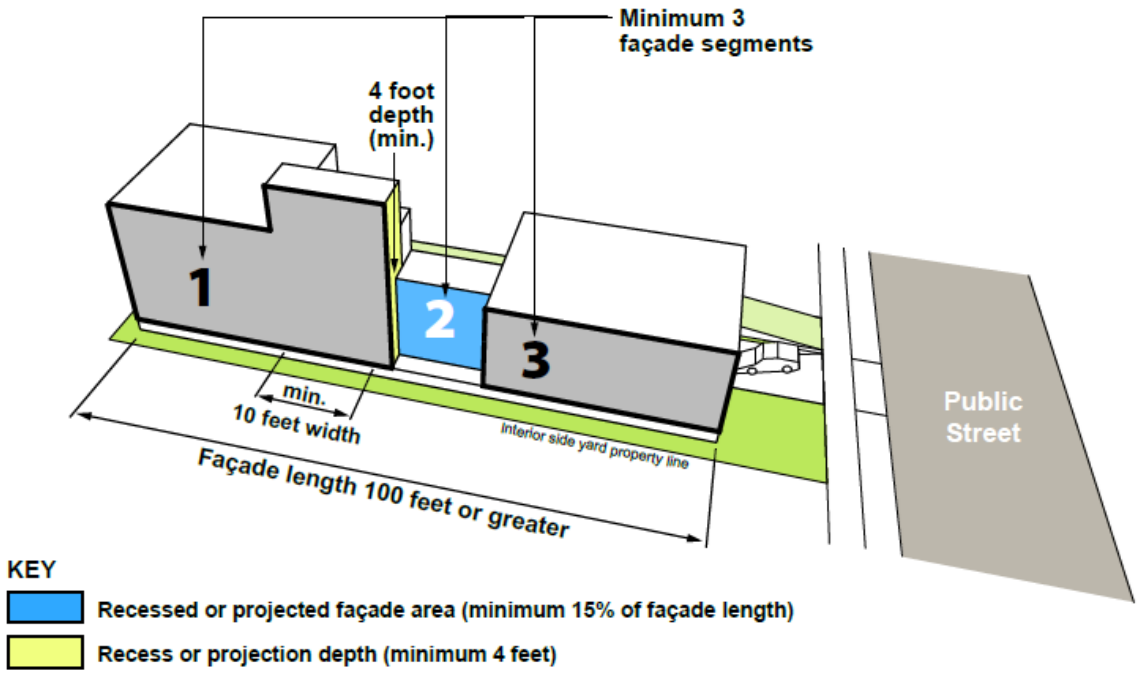


CONDITION 2 – LOTS LESS THAN 90' WIDE

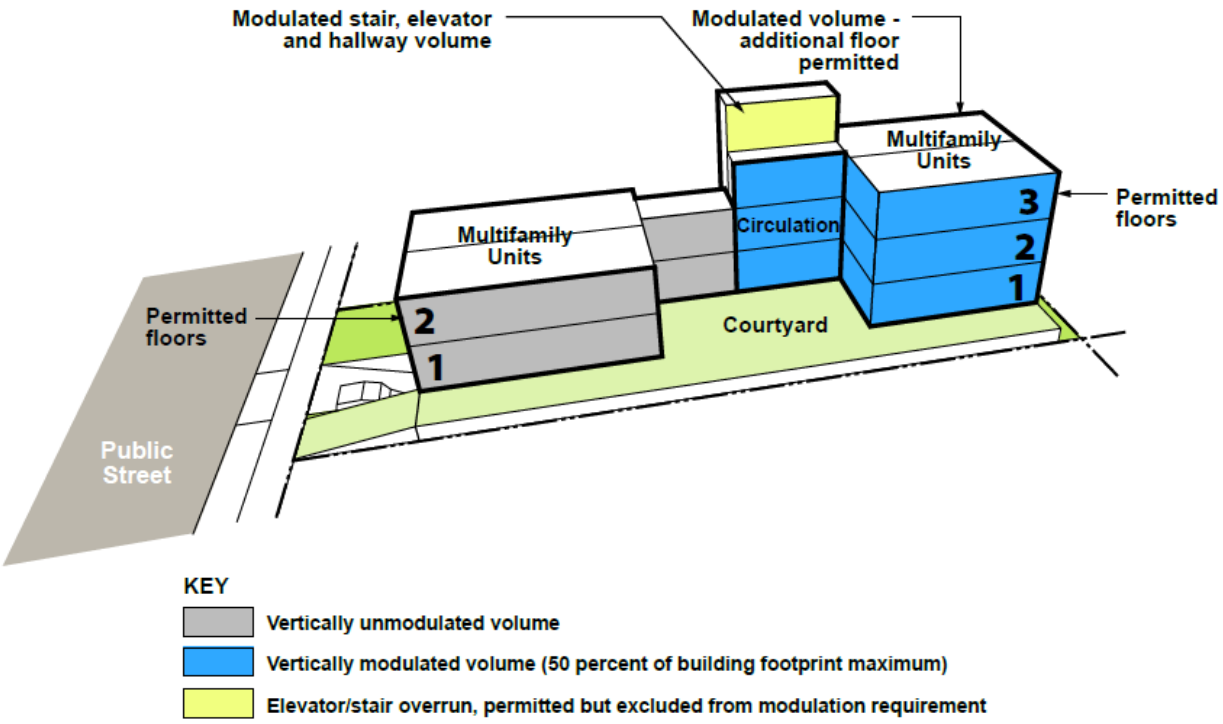
MASSING CONCEPT (DISCUSSION DRAFT)



Horizontal Modulation for Condition 1

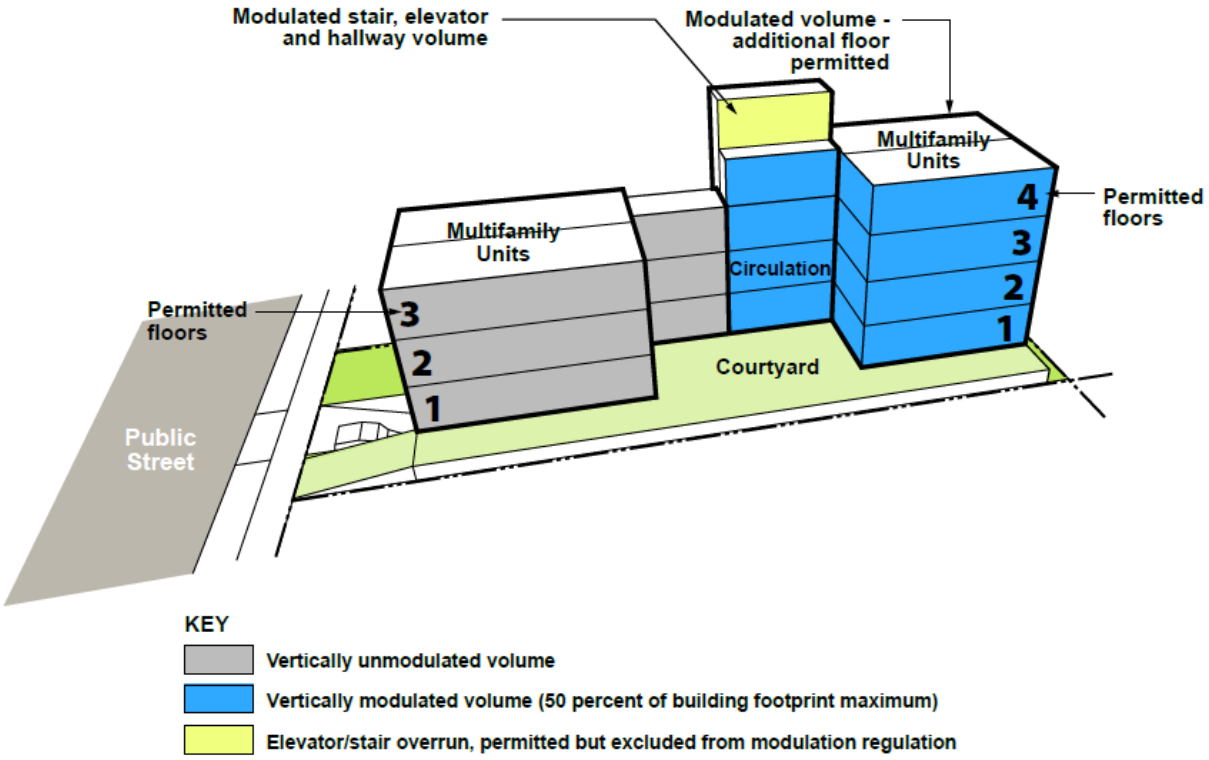


Vertical Modulation for Condition 1



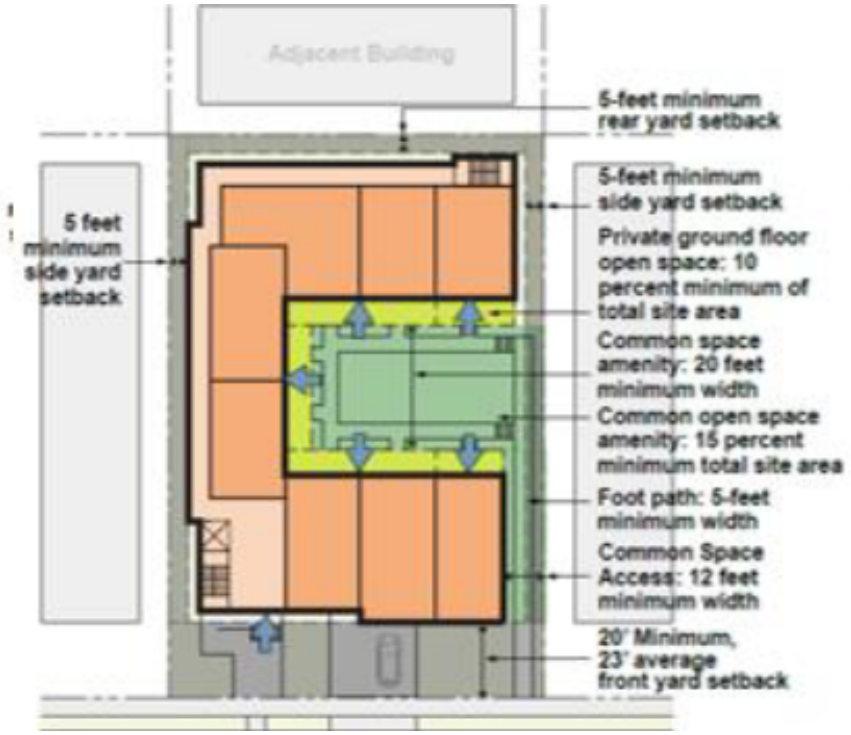
These examples are based on the proposed by-right development standards for lots less than 90 feet in width (for density and stories/height purposes). Given that any multi-family residential project with eight units or more must comply with the City's inclusionary housing ordinance and must provide 15% affordable housing units, such a project would also qualify for a density bonus, as permitted by the State's density bonus law and the City's Zoning Code. Below is an example of massing for a density bonus project on a lot less than 90 feet in width, where the massing would be located towards the rear of the lot which would maintain the existing streetscape as much as possible.

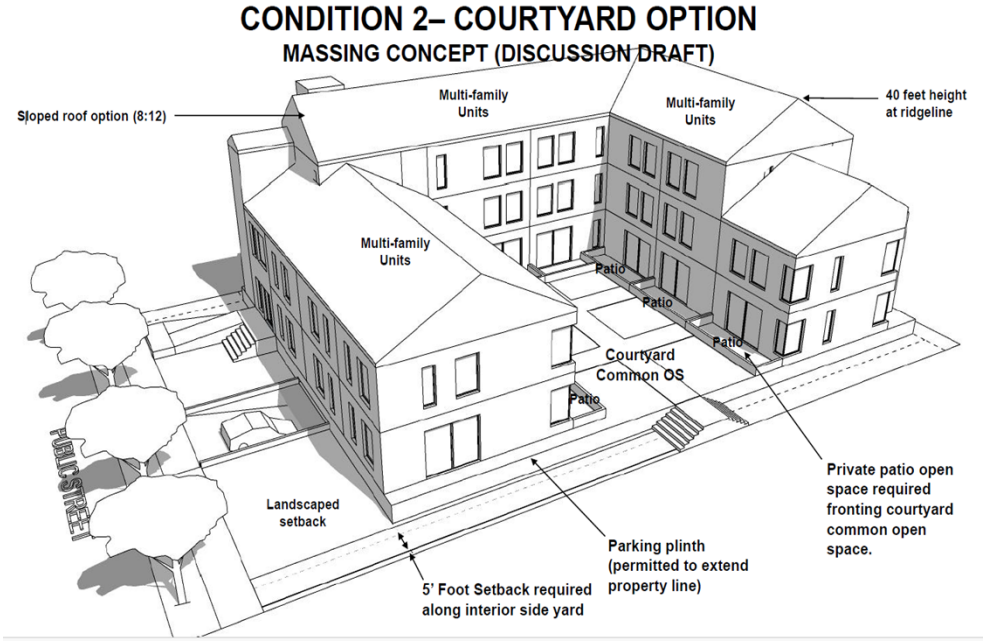
Vertical Modulation for Condition 1 –for a density bonus project



The diagrams on the following page depict the the common open space courtyard option on a lot greater than 90 feet wide ("Condition 2" - typical 100' wide double lot in most multi-family residential zones). Based on Council's input and direction additional diagrams for Condition 2 would be prepared, similar to those shown for Condition 1 above.

Condition 2 – Lot width greater than 90 feet





Staff will provide greater detail on these illustrations during the PowerPoint presentation, as well as on other development and design standards for Council's consideration and discussion.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

Based on Council's comments and direction, staff will update the presentation and prepare standards for public outreach and comment by the development community prior to Design Review Board and Planning Commission review.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

The proposed zoning code amendments are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b)(3), which states the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects [that] have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Council is only providing direction on the development of new objective multi-family development standards at this time, which standards, once finalized will be subjected to any required CEQA review prior to returning to the City Council for approval. As currently conceptualized, the new multi-family residential standards would not change housing densities, and the objective design standard amendments would not result in any environmental impacts. Future, individual development projects would be subject to the proposed ordinance and reviewed for potential environmental impacts.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: Provide comments and adopt motion for staff to proceed with drafting the objective design and development standards.

Alternative 2: City Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Prepared by:
Vilia Zemaitaitis, AICP, Deputy Director of Long Range Planning

Approved by:
Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS

None.