



## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Agenda Item # 1

## AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

**Meeting Date:** September 9, 2020

**Subject:** Objective Standards-City Council Direction Setting Meeting

**Prepared by:** Guido F. Persicone, Planning Services Manager

**Reviewed by:** Jon Biggs, Community Development Director

**Approved by:** Chris Jordan, City Manager

**Attachments:**

1. Lisa Wise Consulting (LWC) and Opticos Design PowerPoint Presentation
2. August 2020 Annotated Objective Design Standards Framework
3. Lisa Wise Consultant Contract

**Initiated by:**

City Council Goal

**Fiscal Impact:**

This meeting does not have a fiscal impact on the City as the consultant contract was previously approved by the Council on March 17, 2020.

**Environmental Review:**

A planning study is statutorily exempt from environmental review per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15262

**Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:**

- Will this effort result in preparation of a development code that will provide adequate and appropriate direction that can be relied on by the community to guide change in Los Altos?

**Summary:**

- City staff and the consultants (Lisa Wise Consulting and Opticos) would like further direction from the City Council regarding the objective standards project so that detailed objectives standards can be completed by November of 2020.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Review the presented material and provide direction on the major themes identified by the consultant for the objective standards project.



**Subject:** Objective Standards-Direction Setting Meeting with the Los Altos City Council

**Purpose**

To prepare an objective zoning standard to guide future development in Los Altos.

**Background**

On March 17, 2020, the City Council authorized a contract with the consultant team (Lisa Wise Consultant and Opticos Design) to prepare objective zoning standards to help guide future development in the City in light of recent changes to state law.<sup>1</sup> While the contract was approved by the City Council, a subcommittee was formed of councilmembers Bruins and Peppers to iron out the project schedule and the final language of the agreement. After two meetings in April, the contract was ready for signature and fully executed by the Community Development Department on April 30, 2020. Since April 30, 2020, the consulting team has conducted a thorough background assessment of relevant multifamily and residential mixed-use objective design standards including but not limited to the General Plan, the Housing Element, the Zoning Code and the Downtown Design Guidelines among other relevant documents and reports. In addition to reviewing a voluminous amount of background data, on June 10<sup>th</sup> and June 11<sup>th</sup> approximately 30 interviews were conducted with key project stakeholders including members of the City Council and Planning Commission, local architects, city staff, community members and downtown business owners.

On June 30, 2020 a City Council meeting was held so that Council could provide direction to city staff and the consultant. At the conclusion of this meeting, clear direction was provided to the consultant and staff with direction on what needed to be accomplished before the next meeting.

<b>Table 1-Objectives for the Joint City Council / Planning Commission Meeting</b>	
<i>Objective</i>	<i>City Staff Response</i>
Interview every City Councilmember and Planning Commissioners	This occurred the week of July 14, 2020.
Density Bonus law-need to explain the density bonus law in relationship to this project	The City Attorney will be discussing density bonus law and its relationship to objective zoning standards at this meeting.
Show the City Council a Downtown urban morphology in terms of what standards need to be in place to replicate the current Los Altos Downtown.	This will be shown to the City Council and Planning Commission via the consultant’s presentation at this meeting.
Show the El Camino Real (ECR) urban morphology-show what ECR could look like in terms of current standards.	This will be shown to the City Council and Planning Commission at this meeting.

<sup>1</sup> See SB 330, SB 35, AB 1485 and AB 881 for modifications to State law that require more clear zoning standards moving forward.



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Need to show how the current code has built recent projects. Need to show how objective standards look like in other cities.	
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The biggest takeaway for city staff and the consultant received from the City Council was to bring back an Annotated Objective Design Standards Framework to a joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission before holding the Community Workshop on the project. In considering these, the City Council will be able to provide direction to city staff and the consultant prior to engaging the community and obtaining its input on the objective standards work to date. This feedback will be important so that the project can stay on track with its projected schedule and move on to the preparation of Deliverable 3B of in the agreement, the Administrative Draft of the Objective Design Standards. Following is a portion of the agreement that provides information about the development of the objective standards:

**Task 3: Public Review Draft Objective Design Standards**

- A. **Annotated Objective Design Standards Framework (LWC and Opticos).** Based on the final Recommendations Memo and community input, the team will prepare an Annotated Objective Design Standards Framework. The Framework will provide the recommended format, template, organization, graphics, and content of the objective design standards. The Annotated Framework will be given at the second City Council study session (see Task 2).
- B. **Administrative Draft Objective Design Standards (LWC and Opticos).** Based on the Annotated Outline and reflective of the analysis, review, and input gathered in Tasks 1 and 2, the consulting team will prepare Administrative Draft Objective Design Standards for multi-family and residential mixed-use development.
- C. **Public Review Draft Objective Design (LWC and Opticos).** Based on staff comments received on the Administrative Draft, the consulting team will prepare a Public Review Draft of the Objective Design Standards will be prepared for review by the community at a City Council meeting.

Following its presentation, the consultant is asking for direction on these three key areas:

1-Does the City Council feel like the Annotated Framework meets the overall intent of the project? Asked in another way, is the consultant on the correct pathway forward?

2-In what format does the City Council want the Design Standards to appear in the Los Altos Municipal Code:

- a) minimum changes to the code organization



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b) Or a new Design Control Chapter? Or is there a different option preferred by Council?

3- Are there other factors, while maybe key not the focus of this project, the City Council feels that should be addressed (e.g., encroachments, parking standards, or other site development standards)?

Considering the compressed project schedule, and the remaining work that needs to be accomplished, it is recommended that a special meeting of the City Council, just for this project, be scheduled for late October so a review of the draft can take place. If the City Council agrees with having a special meeting in October, City staff will organize a Virtual Open House ninety minutes before the meeting to garner community input.

The following is a general time frame for the next key steps for this project, all intended to have this ready for City Council consideration in October

Three Month General Project Timeline



### Options

- 1) Listen to the presentation from the consultant team and City staff and provide direction on the next steps for the objective standards project.
- 2) Direct that a special meeting of the City Council be scheduled in September.

**Advantages:** Allows the project to remain be completed by November 2020.

**Disadvantages:** There is no disadvantage in providing more concise objective zoning standards.

- 3) Continue the item to another City Council meeting



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**Advantages:** There is no advantage to delaying review of this project.

**Disadvantages:** Completion of the project by November, a City Council time line, could be jeopardized.

**Recommendation**

The staff recommends Option 1.