

From: [Andrea Chelemengos](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: FW: objective standards item # 9
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Begin forwarded message:

From: Jon Baer [REDACTED]
Date: August 21, 2021 at 14:38:01 PDT
To: City Council <council@losaltosca.gov>
Cc: Gabriel Engeland <gengeland@losaltosca.gov>, Jon Biggs <jbiggs@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: objective standards item # 9

I wish I could say that the objective standards document in its present form is complete and well enough vetted. Unfortunately it is not yet to that point; there remain a number of issues, omissions and commissions which the council needs to address during both the upcoming council session as well as during another meeting in the not too distant future.

A number of the staff/consultant responses did not necessarily make sense to me, but I am hopeful that one or more council members know enough to either agree with the stated response or ask additional questioning. There were a number of issues that I did identify as concerning:

Policy issues for council

1. Staff comment on page 6 of Attachment 4-are we really going to make those buildings non-conforming? If so how many buildings does this affect and should the criteria for non-conformity be revisited, assuming doing so is feasible?
2. Staff comment on page 2 of Attachment 4-has the horse already left the barn-it is realistic at this point to have a continuous pedestrian and bicycle access along the rear of buildings along El Camino since a number may have already been constructed without this feature. Where is it feasible and where isn't it?
3. There are several places where staff references information included in or defined in other documents. Instead of relying on the fact that staff knows those exist, should we should reference those documents by name in the objective standards document. Probably a question for the city attorney.

Comments/changes that appear incorrect

1. The section on architectural integrity is severely lacking in content-it appears to have been written without input from an architectural professional. We can do better. The Planning Commission architects often cite architectural integrity considerations when evaluating projects; we should tap that expertise and

incorporate it into this section of the document

2. Staff comment on page 10 of Attachment 4-while a building MAY be broke by a change of plane of the ensuring mass of at least 3 feet, it also may be broken by 3 feet a change in plane of a narrow 3 foot indentation, not the larger building mass. There is nothing in the language to preclude that possibility. We need a minimum width since we need to agree if 2', 5' or 10' is acceptable or not.
3. Staff comment on page 11 of Attachment 4-there is a requirement for addressing blank walls-but only at ground level. Don't we want it addressed at each level and throughout a façade?
4. Staff comments on page 20 of Attachment 4-if we don't define a minimum roof slope it leaves that open to interpretation by a developer. Probably not a good idea to leave it undefined even if exists in another document.

Elephant in the room

1. Planning Commission and Council has yet to address a floor height limit in CT or CD/R3. Right now we have buildings-both approved as well as at least one in the pipeline (349 First Street) where plate heights are greater than 8 feet for residential floors (it some cases 11 or 12 feet) which add unnecessary height to a building-further exacerbated by development bonuses and incentives. In the case of 349 First Street, the result is over 10 feet extra height to the building which is currently proposed to be 46 feet with a 58 foot elevator shaft in an area zoned for 35 feet. Furthermore we have a requirement in the objective standards that the first floor be 24" taller than upper floors-if a developer chooses to make 12' plate heights do we really want to require that the first floor be 14 feet in height. The staff response on page 8 of Attachment 4 does not adequately address this concern. These issues need to be urgently addressed.

I would encourage council to pass this set of objective standards with as many corrections as is feasible during the upcoming council meeting. but I would also request council to agendize it for a upcoming meeting/study session to make further corrections to the document