



CITY OF LOS ALTOS STORY POLE POLICY

Purpose

In accordance with City Council's Open Government Policy, adopted on March 24, 2015, and subsequently amended, all multi-story commercial, multiple-family, mixed-use and public facility development projects subject to Planning Commission and City Council review must have story poles erected as part of the public review process. The purpose of this policy is to help show the development's height, massing and profile in the context of the actual environment and to help provide a visual notice of a project.

Procedure

1. For projects that require story poles, the applicant's architect or engineer must prepare a Story Pole Plan to indicate the locations where the poles will be installed.
2. A Story Pole Plan shall be approved by the Community Development Director prior to the placement of the poles on the site. Once approved, the applicant shall inform the Community Development Director when the placement of the story poles is complete and submit photographs showing the installation in context.
3. The story poles shall be installed at least twenty (20) days before the first public hearing on the project and shall be kept in place until the project has been acted upon and the appeal period has ended. If the project is appealed, the story poles shall remain until final action is taken. If final consideration of the project is substantially delayed, or the project is substantially modified, the Community Development Director may require the removal or the modification of the story poles. Once a final determination has been taken on a project, the story poles must be removed within sixty (60) days of the date of the action.
4. Failure to install story poles in compliance with these standards and/or timelines will result in the continuance of the public hearing on the project until compliance with the standards and/or timelines is achieved.

Story Pole Plan Requirements

1. The Story Pole Plan must be at an appropriate scale and include:
 - a. A site plan showing the location of any existing structure(s), the outline of any proposed structures and the location of all story poles;
 - b. Elevation views of the story poles for all elevations;
 - c. The story pole materials, installation details and structural requirements; and
 - d. An indemnity statement on the cover sheet, signed by the owner or applicant, as follows:

"The undersigned (applicant/owner) agrees to indemnify and hold the City harmless for any liability, costs or expenses, including attorney's fees, associated with the construction of, or any damage caused by, the story poles or support apparatus installed per this plan."

2. The story poles shall be of sufficient number and location to adequately demonstrate the height, mass, and bulk of the project. At a minimum, story poles shall be placed at all outside building corners of the building wall (excluding eaves) and along the main rooflines (ridges, hips and valleys) of the proposed structure(s) or addition. Architectural elements such as towers, spires, elevator and mechanical penthouses, cupolas, mechanical equipment screening and similar elements that are visible from the streetscape must be represented by the story poles.
3. A licensed surveyor or civil engineer shall submit written verification that the location and height the poles and netting accurately represents the height, profile and location of the proposed structure(s) or addition.
4. A waiver or amendment to these requirements may only be granted by the City Council.

Materials and Methods

1. Story poles shall be constructed of lumber, metal poles, or other sturdy building material. Such materials shall be designed to withstand the wind and weather. At least two-foot wide brightly colored woven plastic netting or flagging must be used to represent the rooflines of the proposed structure(s) or addition. One of the story poles on each elevation must be clearly marked and labeled in five-foot increments measured from the proposed finished grade and consistent with the approved Story Pole Plan.
2. All story poles shall be placed, braced and supported to ensure the health, safety and general welfare of the public. Applicants shall sign an agreement that holds the City harmless for any liability associated with the construction of, or damage caused by the story poles. If at any time, the City determines the story poles to be unsafe, they shall be repaired and reset immediately by the applicant or, at the City's discretion, removed. Depending on the scope of the poles, building permits and inspections may be required at the discretion of the Community Development Director.

Exceptions

1. The City Council may grant exceptions to the Story Pole Policy due to:
 - a. A public health and/or safety concern, or
 - b. If such an installation would impair the use of existing structure(s) or the site to the extent it could not be occupied and the existing business and/or residential use would be infeasible.

Some form of poles and netting and/or on-site physical representation of the project may still be required, even if an exception is granted.

2. The Story Pole Plan may be limited in scope at the discretion of the City Council. In such cases such as where there are multiple detached structures proposed and where identifying the locations of key structures would suffice, the story poles may be limited to the outline(s) of key structures and/or showing a structure(s) greatest height and mass.
3. In granting an exception, the City Council may require additional digital imagery simulations, computer modeling, built to-scale models or other visual techniques in-lieu of the story pole requirements.