



REPORT to the LA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE: July 2, 2025

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 24 (ZONING) OF THE LA MESA MUNICIPAL CODE TO ADD CHAPTER 25.054; OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

DESCRIPTION: An ordinance amending Title 24 (Zoning) of the La Mesa Municipal Code to add Chapter 25.054; Objective Design Standards applicable to housing developments as defined by the Housing Accountability Act (Government Code Section 65589.5)

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Community Development

SUMMARY:

Issue(s):

Should Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending that City Council amend the Zoning Ordinance to add Chapter 25.054; Objective Design Standards applicable to housing developments as defined by the Housing Accountability Act (Government Code Section 65589.5)?

Recommendation:

That the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending City Council amend Title 24 (Zoning) to add Chapter 25.054 (**Attachment A**).

Environmental Review:

The project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15282(r), Other Statutory Exemptions for determinations made regarding a city or county's regional housing needs as set forth in Section 65584 of the State of California Government Code.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the Housing Accountability Act (Government Code Section 65589.5), the State of California has passed numerous housing laws that aim to streamline and provide predictability in local approval processes for multi-family housing projects. To conform to state housing law, the City of La Mesa's 6th Cycle Housing Element (Housing Element), certified by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on July 6, 2023, includes an implementation program (Implementation Program 20) that stipulates that the City will amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide objective design standards to certain housing developments as required by state law. The adoption of clear and measurable design standards would allow for housing projects to be evaluated by staff through the building permit process (ministerial review) consistent with requirements of state law.

A draft of the objective design standards (ODS) program, comprised of a guidebook and checklist of specific clear and measurable design requirements, was considered by the Planning Commission at a noticed public hearing held on May 21, 2025. The Planning Commission reviewed and recommended City Council adoption of the ODS. Resolution No. PC 2025-10 recommending City Council adoption is provided as **Attachment B**. No further action of the Planning Commission is required for the ODS program. The request action is a recommendation to City Council to add LMMC Chapter 25.054; which would implement objective design standards.

DISCUSSION:

The new chapter LMMC 25.0254 would establish the legislative framework for the for the City to adopt objective design standards in accordance with State law and the City's adopted Housing Element Implementation Program 20. The ordinance would provide for the ministerial design review process where Design Review Board approval and City Council ratification would no longer be required for eligible housing developments, such as multi-family and mixed-use projects. Review for consistency with the ODS would be done by staff through the building permit process. This will provide a more streamlined and transparent process, intended to save time and money for applicants. Projects eligible to utilize ODS may still have to comply with other standards and approvals required in the Municipal Code.

The Planning Commission's recommendations on the ordinance amendment and the previously considered ODS program will be brought forward to City Council together later in the summer 2025.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROJECT:

Notice of the Planning Commission hearing to consider the ODS ordinance amendment to add LMMC Chapter 25.054; Objective Design Standards was published in the Daily Transcript on June 12, 2025, in accordance with Municipal Code requirements.

CONCLUSION:

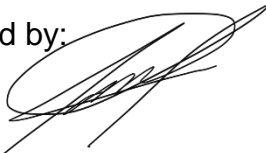
Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending City Council amend Title 24 (Zoning) of the La Mesa Municipal Code to add chapter 25.054 (**Attachment A**).

Respectfully submitted by:

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Reviewed by:



Jared Chavez
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Attachments:

- A. Draft Resolution
- B. Resolution No. PC 2025-10