LAND USE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

HEARING DATE: November 5, 2026 **AGENDA ITEM 2**

Project Description

APN:	N/A
Applicant:	San Bernardino County
Community:	Countywide
Location:	Countywide
Project No:	PMISC-2024-00012
Staff:	Vincent Acuna, Planning Manager
Workshop Topic:	Multifamily Objective Design Standards Study Session

Report Prepared By: Vincent Acuna, Planning Manager

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

State housing laws require certain qualifying multifamily and mixed-use housing development projects to be reviewed through streamlined or ministerial approval processes using objective standards. The Department has developed draft Objective Design Standards (ODS) to provide objective design criteria for projects subject to these State law requirements. The purpose of this study session is to present an overview of the draft multifamily ODS to the Planning Commission and solicit applicable feedback.

BACKGROUND:

What is ODS?

To address the housing shortage, recent State legislation, including but not limited to Senate Bill (SB) 35 and SB 330, requires certain housing development projects to be reviewed for compliance with objective standards and then approved ministerially. Objective standards may include applicable general plan, zoning, subdivision, and design review standards. ODS specifically establish objective criteria governing the design of a project and involve no subjective judgment by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to a uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the applicant and public official before submittal of an application. ODS provides predictability and transparency to applicants and staff throughout the approval process. State housing laws limit the standards and criteria that a local agency may apply in reviewing or disapproving certain housing development projects.

Applicable California Housing Law

Housing Accountability Act (SB 167, 2017)

The Housing Accountability Act (HAA) limits a local jurisdiction's ability to disapprove, or require a reduction in the density of, a housing development project that complies with applicable objective general plan, zoning, subdivision, and design review standards and criteria. The HAA also limits the circumstances under which a local jurisdiction may disapprove, or conditionally approve in a manner that renders infeasible, certain housing development projects for very low-, low-, or moderate-income households or emergency shelters without specific factual findings.

Affordable Housing Streamlined Approval Process (SB 35 (2017), as amended by SB 423 (2023))

SB 35, as amended by SB 423, establishes a streamlined, ministerial approval process for qualifying multifamily or mixed-use housing development projects that satisfy specified statutory requirements, including applicable

affordability and site criteria. Eligible projects are reviewed for compliance with applicable objective planning standards, including ODS, and the ministerial approval process is not subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Housing Crisis Act (SB 330, 2019)
SB 330 established procedural protections intended to provide greater certainty and expedite the review of housing development projects, including a preliminary application process that establishes the development standards applicable to a project and limits on the number of hearings for qualifying housing development projects. SB 330 also restricts the application of certain non-objective design standards to housing development projects.

County Housing Element
In addition to addressing applicable State housing law requirements, the ODS contribute to the partial implementation of Program 12 in the County's Housing Element, which includes establishing objective standards for projects that are eligible for ministerial review. As prepared, the draft ODS checklist would apply to those projects eligible under State law for streamlined review, which may include:

- Residential-only multifamily apartments
- Mixed-use projects where at least two-thirds of the project's square footage is designated for residential use
- Transitional housing or supportive housing
- Farmworker housing

How is the County Implementing ODS?

The County's Development Code currently regulates all multifamily development through standards outlined in Chapter 84.16. Staff developed a Multifamily ODS Checklist (Exhibit A) that converted the subjective standards in the Development Code regulating multi-family development to ODS. The table below provides a few notable examples of how subjective multifamily standards in the County's Development Code were refined into ODS.

STANDARD	SUBJECTIVE CODE LANGUAGE	OBJECTIVE STANDARD CONVERSION
Façade Articulation	Boxy and monotonous facades that lack human scale dimensions and have large expanses of flat wall planes should be prohibited. Architectural treatments (e.g., recessed windows, moldings, decorative trim, and wood frames) should be used to add visual interest to the facade. Windows of varied shape, size, and placement are strongly encouraged.	For every 50 feet of façade, a massing break of 10 feet in width and a minimum of 4 feet in depth from the primary façade shall be provided. All buildings two stories or more in height shall provide façade modulation through at least two of the following: • A change in façade materials, textures, and colors between the ground floor and the second floor. • A change in fenestration pattern (window size, style, or placement). • A horizontal façade projection or recess at least 3 feet extending for at least 30 percent of the area of each façade.
Rooflines	Roof lines should be broken up and varied within the overall horizontal plane. Combinations of roof heights that create variation and visual interest are strongly encouraged.	Rooflines shall be vertically articulated at least 3 feet every fifty (50) feet along the street frontage, using architectural elements such as parapets, varying cornices, reveals, clerestory windows, or varying roof height and/or form.

Entries	Building entrances and individual dwelling unit entries shall be accentuated by architectural elements, lighting, and/or landscaping to further emphasize their private nature.	The primary building entrance shall face the primary street and accessible from a public sidewalk. If not possible, the building's primary entrance shall face a pedestrian walkway that is connected to a public sidewalk. Any residential unit on the ground floor shall have an individually recognizable entry by using two or more of the following techniques: • Weather protection element, such as an awning, canopy, or a recessed entry with a minimum recess or projection of 48 square feet in area. • Individual stoop or elevated entry. • Entry patio, terrace, or forecourt. • A minimum 3-foot change in façade depth from adjacent unit entries.
Common Open Space Seating	Seating opportunities should be provided in both sunny and shaded areas. Seating in areas that offer opportunities for social interaction and informal surveillance (e.g., a bench near the mail box area or benches near tot lot areas and laundry rooms) are strongly encouraged. A variety of sitting area designs, from formal arrangements (e.g., benches) to informal arrangements (e.g., low walls or steps) is strongly encouraged. In general, benches should be located in areas that have some provision for shade.	In common open space areas, three (3) seats for every 1,000 sq ft of open space shall be provided. Shade shall be provided for at least 75% of the seating through landscaping or a structure during maximum sunlight.
Lighting Level	Lighting levels shall vary depending on the specific use and conditions, but the overall consideration shall be to provide lighting levels sufficient that intruders cannot lurk in shadows, steps and other grade changes are apparent, residents can easily unlock their door or identify visitors on their doorstep, and opportunities for theft and vandalism are reduced or eliminated.	Lighting levels shall vary depending on the specific use and conditions, but the overall consideration shall be to provide a minimum 1-foot candle illumination on all on-site sidewalks, walkways, pathways, paseos, and door/entrance thresholds.

Implementing the Multifamily ODS Checklist does not mean that all multifamily projects will be required to follow ODS. Multifamily projects may still use the standards outlined in Development Code Chapter 84.16 should they elect to do so and go through the discretionary approval process. The ODS does not change existing density, floor area, or building height allowed under the Development Code.

ODS implementation will consist of two (2) phases:

Phase I: Multifamily ODS Checklist

This Multifamily ODS Checklist (Exhibit A) is based on the existing Development Code and addresses the immediate need for multifamily objective standards under State housing law. Following direction and input from the Planning Commission Study Session, staff will finalize the Multifamily ODS Checklist and bring it forward for formal Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors consideration as part of a broader Development Code update to implement Program 12 of the County's state certified Housing Element. Program 12 requires the County to update certain regulations to remove governmental constraints related to a variety of housing types including residential care facilities, permanent supportive housing, employee housing, and other types of multi-family development. This combined development code amendment addressing Program 12 of the Housing element is expected in Winter/Spring 2027.

Phase II: Comprehensive Multifamily ODS Manual

Staff will convert the Multifamily ODS Checklist into a Multifamily ODS Manual featuring enhanced graphics, visual aids, and diagrams. Standards integrating regional considerations from individual Community Action Guides will also be developed. The Multifamily ODS Manual will return to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for consideration in late 2027.

Any non-substantive changes to the Manual can be made administratively after the completion of Phase II, as the Multifamily ODS Manual will exist outside the Development Code. This approach allows the County to rapidly respond to any changes in State housing law in the future.

STUDY SESSION

This study session provides an opportunity for the Planning Commission and the public to familiarize themselves with ODS and, as necessary, provide comments or recommended changes to the objective standards, as outlined in the Multifamily ODS Checklist (Exhibit A).

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Not applicable. A study session is not a project subject to CEQA.

ATTACHMENTS:

EXHIBIT A:	Multifamily ODS Checklist
EXHIBIT B	Study Session Presentation Slides

Exhibit A: Multifamily ODS Checklist

Multifamily Residential Objective Design Standards Checklist

San Bernardino County's Objective Design Standards (ODS) for Multifamily Residential Developments are intended to serve as part of a measurable, easily verifiable, and streamlined entitlement process for applicable housing developments. ODS supplements Title 8 of the County's development code by prescribing technical design standards that regulate building and site design.

Applicability

This document is a review checklist of Objective Design Standards (ODS) applicable to multifamily residential projects. Objective Design Standards are also applicable to developments pursuant to any provision of state law that references objective design standards including, but not limited to, the Housing Accountability Act. Applicants may seek exceptions or modifications to these standards as allowed by state law, or by electing to process the development application through discretionary review.

Applicant Responsibility

Applicants are responsible for accurately filling out and confirming the applicable ODS checklist items. Please mark with the box to identify whether or not your project complies. If a specific standard is not applicable to your project, please mark an "X" in the "N/A" column.

ODS Applicable to All Multi-Family Projects

The standards in this Section apply to all multi-family development projects that qualify for objective review under State law.

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
		SITE PLANNING			
		LOCATION OF STRUCTURES			
84.16.080 (b)(3)(B)	**1**	**Solar Orientation** All south facing windows of all structures shall incorporate awnings to minimize summer solar exposure.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (a)(1)	**2**	**Facade Orientation** The primary building facade and massing shall be oriented to the primary street.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.040 (a)(3)	**3**	**Location of Entrance** The primary building entrance shall face the primary street and accessible from a public sidewalk. If not possible, the building's primary entrance shall face a pedestrian walkway that is connected to a public sidewalk.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (a)(1)	**4**	**Corner Parcels** On corner parcels, both street-facing facades shall face the intersecting streets. See Figure 84-1 (Siting of Multi-Family Structure(s) Parallel to Public Right-of-Way).	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (b)(2)(B)	**5**	**Siting, Clustering** On sites with more than two buildings, buildings shall be clustered to provide functional and accessible common spaces, such as courtyards, pathways, paseos, and recreational areas, to all residents.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.040 (a)(1)(B)	**6**	**Natural Amenities** Removal of any existing landforms, trees, and rock outcrops within the required front and street side	☐	☐	☐

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
		setbacks shall be prohibited, unless removal is authorized by the Director of Land Use Services. Applicants may include notes to support assessment.			
84.16.040 (a)(2)	**7**	**Location of Accessory Structures** Accessory structures (e.g., swimming pools, improved recreational/open spaces, storage structures, etc.) shall not be located between an adjacent public right-of-way and a multi-family structure, or between a property line abutting a single-family land use zone and a multi-family structure. This restriction does not apply where the accessory structure or use is adjacent to parcels zoned for multi-family or non-residential uses.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.040 (a)(3)	**8**	**Minimum Separation Between Structures** The separation distances identified in Table 84-9 (Minimum Separation Between Multi-Family Structures) shall apply to parcels containing two or more dwelling units that are in separate detached structures. The separation shall be between opposite exterior walls. Walls shall be considered opposite if a perpendicular line drawn in a horizontal plane from one structure intersects another structure's wall. The front side of a unit is the side containing the primary entrance to the dwelling unit. See Figure 84-2 (Minimum Separation Between Multi-Family Structures).	☐	☐	☐
84.16.040 (a)(4)	**9**	**Setbacks** Setbacks shall be as provided in § 82.04.060 Residential Land Use Zoning District Site Planning and Building Standards, except as modified by the minimum setback standards in Table 84-10 (Minimum Setbacks for Multi-Family Structures)	☐	☐	☐
		PARKING			

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
94.16.040 (a)(4)(h)	**10**	**Parking** Parking areas, parking stalls, and driveways shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 83.11 (Parking and Loading Standards). Storage of boats, campers, trailers and other recreational vehicles shall be prohibited on-site unless oversize parking areas are provided and designated. These areas shall be screened from adjacent streets and residences as specified in Section 83.02.060 (Screening and Buffering). Recreational vehicle parking may not be used to meet the standard parking requirements.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (d)(2)	**11**	**Distance Between Parking Area and Dwelling Units** Parking lots shall be located no further than 200 feet from the dwelling units to be served as measured from the midpoint of the parking areas to the closest entrance doors of the dwelling unit to be served.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (d)(3)	**12**	**Pedestrian Accessway** Parking lots shall be designed so that an unobstructed pedestrian accessway at least four feet in width is provided between the public right-of-way and the parking area.	☐	☐	☐
		CARPORTS AND/OR GARAGES			
84.16.050 (d)(4)	**13**	At least one of the parking spaces required for each dwelling unit in Table 83-15 (Parking Required by Land Use) shall be covered (i.e., carport or garage).	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (d)(4)(A)(II)	**14**	Roofs composed of rock material shall be prohibited.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (d)(4)(A)(III)	**15**	The elevation of a detached garage that faces a street shall have a pitched roof with windows or at least two other architectural features that are the same as the primary multi-family structure(s).	☐	☐	☐

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
84.16.050 (d)(4)(B)(I)	**16**	Carports and/or detached garages shall be distributed evenly throughout the project in groupings of no more than six covered spaces.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (d)(4)(B)(II)	**17**	Carport and garage entries shall not be located between a multi-family structure and a required street frontage, but shall instead be located in groups on the interior of a parcel so that they are not visible from adjacent streets.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (d)(4)(B)(III)	**18**	No more than six garage doors shall appear on any elevation of a multi-family structure. The plane of each garage door shall be offset at least two feet from the plane of the garage door adjacent to it.	☐	☐	☐
		BUILDING DESIGN			
		ENTRANCES			
84.16.040 (b)(4)	**19**	**Visibility** Locate primary pedestrian entrances of residential units to face open spaces, courtyards, pedestrian paths and streets to increase visibility into these spaces.	☐	☐	☐
Standalone	**20**	**Entries** Any residential unit on the ground floor shall have an individually recognizable entry by using two or more of the following techniques:			
		Weather protection element, such as an awning, canopy, or a recessed entry with a minimum recess or projection of 48 square feet in area.	☐	☐	☐
		Individual stoop or elevated entry.	☐	☐	☐
		Entry patio, terrace, or forecourt.	☐	☐	☐
		A minimum 3-foot change in façade depth from adjacent unit entries.	☐	☐	☐

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
84.16.040 (b)(2)	**21**	**Disabled Accessibility** Handicapped accessibility shall be integrated into the design concept in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (if required) and Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations.	☐	☐	☐
		STRUCTURE			
84.16.040 (b)(3)	**22**	**Length/Width of Structure** A multi-family structure shall not exceed 100 feet in length or width.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.040 (c)	**23**	**Dwelling Unit Sizes** Dwelling units shall be the minimum sizes indicated in Table 84-11 (Minimum Dwelling Unit Sizes in Multi-Family Development).	☐	☐	☐
84.16.040 (d)	**24**	**Density and Unit Type Mix** A minimum of two unit types are required (i.e., efficiency, one-bedroom, two bedroom, etc.) to provide a range of options for owners or renters in different income, age, and family structure categories.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (c)(1)(B)	**25**	**Overall Character** All support and accessory structures in the project (e.g., laundry facilities, recreation structures, carports, garages, and the management office) shall be designed with at least two components (materials and/or architectural elements) that are the same as the primary multi-family structure(s).	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (c)(3)	**26**	**Façade Modulation** For every 50 feet of facade a massing break of 10 feet in width and that is a minimum of 4 feet in depth from the primary façade shall be provided.	☐	☐	☐
	27	**Façade Modulation**			

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
84.16.080 (c)(3)		All buildings two stories or more in height shall provide façade modulation through at least two of the following:			
		A change in façade materials, textures, and colors between the ground floor and the second floor	☐	☐	☐
		A change in fenestration pattern (window size, style, or placement).	☐	☐	☐
		A horizontal façade projection or recess at least 3 feet extending for at least 30 percent of the area of each façade.	☐	☐	☐
Standalone	**28**	**Transitional Massing** For buildings three floors or higher that are adjacent to a single-family residential zone, a transition shall be provided along the entire length of the shared property line using one of the following approaches:			
		A minimum 5-foot-wide landscape area planted with landscape screening along the full length of the property line and a minimum 5-foot upper story setback from the minimum building setback for the entire adjacent façade for the third floor and above. The landscaped area shall include the following: • Trees at a minimum height of 10 feet, and maximum spacing of 10 feet on-center at installation. • All trees shall be provided at a minimum size of 24-inch box. • A solid wall at least 6 feet in height in compliance with Chapter 83.06 (Fences, Hedges, and Walls).	☐	☐	☐
		An additional 5-foot side-yard setback from the minimum building setback including a minimum 5-foot-wide	☐	☐	☐

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
		landscape area planted with landscape screening along the full length of the property line. The landscaped area shall include the following: • Trees at a minimum height of 10 feet, and maximum spacing of 10 feet on-center at installation. • All trees shall be provided at a minimum size of 24-inch box. • A solid wall at least 6 feet in height in compliance with Chapter 83.06 (Fences, Hedges, and Walls).			
		ROOFS			
84.16.080 (c)(4)(A)	**29**	**Types** Multi-family buildings shall be designed using at least two different room forms to visually break up the massing of the building.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (c)(4)(B)	**30**	**Roof Lines** Rooflines shall be vertically articulated at least 3 feet every fifty (50) feet along the street frontage, using architectural elements such as parapets, varying cornices, reveals, clerestory windows, or varying roof height and/or form.	☐	☐	☐
		ON-SITE MANAGER			
84.16.060 (c)	**31**	A full-time resident manager shall be required for all multi-family projects with 20 or more dwelling units.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.060 (d)	**32**	A separate management office shall be required for all multi-family projects of 20 or more dwelling units. The management office shall be located in a central, visible location. See Figure 84-5 (Management Office in Central Location).	☐	☐	☐

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
		STORAGE			
84.16.050 (g)(1)	**33**	**Private Storage Space** In addition to closet space, each dwelling unit shall be provided a minimum of 150 cubic feet of private enclosed storage space. This space may be provided within the unit's parking garage or immediately adjacent to the dwelling unit. This space is not allowed in carports.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (g)(2)	**34**	**Bicycle/Motorcycle Storage Area,** All multi-family projects shall provide covered, enclosed, and secure storage areas for bicycles and motorcycles. Motorcycle spaces shall be at least four feet by eight feet.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (e)(2)	**35**	**Doors for Dwelling Units** Entry doors for individual dwelling units shall include viewers.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (e)(1)	**36**	**Doors to Community Facilities – Access Control** Doors to community facilities and amenities (e.g., communal laundry, community center, etc.) shall incorporate access control technology (e.g., access card or key).	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (e)(1)	**37**	**Doors to Community Facilities - Transparency** At least 60 percent of the ground floor, street facing walls of non-residential uses shall include transparent window or door glazing between two and 10 feet in height from grade, providing unobstructed views into the non-residential space.	☐	☐	☐
		LANDSCAPING / OPEN SPACE			
		LANDSCAPING			

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
83.10; 84.16.040 (f)	**38**	**Landscaping** Comply with the regional landscape standards pursuant to § 83.10.080 and the requirements of the State Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) as adopted by reference in Title 6 of the San Bernardino County Code of Ordinances.	☐	☐	☐
83.10	**39**	A minimum of 40% of the lot area shall be landscaped	☐	☐	☐
		COMMON OPEN SPACE			
84.16.050 (h)(1)	**40**	**Minimum Size** A minimum of 900 sq ft of common open space shall be provided with an additional 100 sq ft per unit for every dwelling unit above nine (9) units. Common open space is defined as an open area or recreational amenity or facility that is designed and intended to be used for outdoor living and/or recreation. Required front, rear, and side setback areas along streets, driveways, parking areas, and walkways shall not be used to satisfy any part of the common open space requirement.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (h)(1); 84.16.060 (a)(1)	**41**	**Minimum Dimensions** Common open space shall be no less than 30 ft in any direction.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (b)(3)(A)	**42**	**Access** Common open spaces shall be provided adjacent to private areas, common areas, or a combination of both. All common open spaces shall interface with adjacent buildings via direct connections through doors and entryways and must be accessible to all living units on the development site.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (b)(3)(B)	**43**	**Location**	☐	☐	☐

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
		Common open spaces areas shall not be located directly next to arterial streets, service areas, or adjacent commercial development to ensure they are sheltered from the noise and traffic of adjacent streets. Alternatively, dense landscaping with a minimum depth of 10 fee shall be provided between the open space area and arterial street, service area, or commercial development. Common open space shall be visible from a minimum of 75% of total dwelling units.			
84.16.080 (b)(3)(C)	**44**	**Edges** Open space areas shall have edges defined with site furniture (such as a continuous concrete bench) and landscaping (such as hedges, trees, and robust middle-story perennial plantings) to provide visual separation between private open space, public open space, and the public right-of-way.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (b)(4)	**45**	**Outdoor Play Areas** Where outdoor play areas are provided, these areas shall be separated by at least ten (10) ft from vehicular use areas. Seating adjacent to play areas shall be provided.	☐	☐	☐
		PRIVATE OPEN SPACE			
84.16.060 (b)	**46**	**Minimum Size** A minimum of 125 square feet of private open space (e.g., patios, balcony, decks, etc.), a minimum of six feet in width, shall be provided for each dwelling unit. Required private open space areas shall be directly accessible from the dwelling unit and not be used to satisfy any part of the common open space requirement.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.060 (b)	**47**	**Enclosure**	☐	☐	☐

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
		Enclosure of private open space (i.e. balcony railings) shall not block residents' sight lines into common open space areas.			
		AMENITIES			
84.16.070	**48**	**Required Amenities** Project shall comply with the provisions of section § 84.16.070 Common Amenities and Facilities	☐	☐	☐
		SITE ELEMENTS			
84.16.080 (d)(1)(A)	**49**	**Seating** In common open space areas, three (3) seats for every 1,000 sq ft of open space shall be provided. Shade shall be provided for at least 75% of the seating through landscaping or a structure during maximum sunlight.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (d)(2)(A)	**50**	**Solid Waste and Recycling Receptacles** A waste and recycling receptacle shall be located within 25 ft of each seating area and mailbox cluster.	☐	☐	☐
Standalone	**51**	**Bicycle Parking** Bicycle parking shall be provided at 1 space per dwelling unit. Bicycle racks shall be located within 100 ft of the building entrance, spaced 3 ft apart and setback a minimum of 2 ft from pathways and building walls.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (d)(2)(A)	**52**	**Mailboxes, Location** Mailbox clusters shall be visible from as many dwelling units as possible.	☐	☐	☐
		SIGNAGE			
Standalone	**53**	**Signage** All signage included in a multi-family residential project shall comply with the provisions set forth in Chapter 83.13: Sign Regulations.	☐	☐	☐

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
84.16.060 (e)(1)	**54**	**Signs, Directional** Clear legible entry signs shall be provided to identify the development. Internal circulation signs and visitor parking areas shall also be clearly indicated. A directory that shows the location of structures and individual dwelling units within the development shall be provided.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.060 (e)(2)	**55**	**Signs, Structures** Structure numbers and individual unit numbers shall be readily visible, in a consistent location, lit at night so that glare from luminous sources shall not exceed one-half footcandle, and compatible with the overall design of the residential project.	☐	☐	☐
		UTILITIES, SERVICES, LIGHTING, AND FENCES			
		LIGHTING			
84.16.040 (g)	**56**	**Lighting** Lighting shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 83.07 (Light Trespass).	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (c)(1)	**57**	**Security** Lighting levels shall vary depending on the specific use and conditions, but the overall consideration shall be to provide a minimum 1-foot candle illumination on all on-site sidewalks, walkways, pathways, paseos, and door/entrance thresholds.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (c)(2)	**58**	**Lighting Height** Freestanding light standards shall be between 12 and 16 feet in height to allow proper illumination, discourage vandalism, and have a pedestrian scale.			
84.16.050 (c)(2)	**59**	**Lighting Orientation** Lighting shall be designed to shine downward and eliminate skyward glare.			

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
84.16.050 (c)(2)	**60**	**Internal Circulation Street Lighting** Street lighting shall be installed along the internal circulation streets.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (c)(3)	**61**	**Parking Area Lighting** Lighting in parking areas shall be arranged to prevent direct glare and light trespass into adjacent dwelling units and onto neighboring uses/properties.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (c)(4)	**62**	**Pedestrian Lighting** Pedestrian-scaled lighting shall be located along all walkways within the development.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (c)(5)	**63**	**Site Lighting** Site lighting may be located on a multi-family structure to illuminate site areas not covered by individual light standards.	☐	☐	☐
		FENCING			
84.16.040 (e)	**64**	**Fencing** A solid six-foot high fence of wood and/or masonry shall be installed along the property lines but shall not encroach into the front or street side setbacks. Additional fencing in compliance with Chapter 83.06 (Fences, Hedges, and Walls) may be installed.	☐	☐	☐
		REFUSE STORAGE			
84.16.050 (f)	**65**	**Solid Waste/Recyclable Material Storage Areas** Solid waste/recyclable material storage areas shall be clearly designated on the plot plan.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (f)	**66**	**Solid Waste/Recyclable Material Storage Areas** The areas shall be clearly accessible for pickup and shall be effectively screened from public view in compliance with Chapter 84.24 (Solid Waste/Recyclable Materials Storage).	☐	☐	☐

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
84.16.050 (f)	**67**	**Solid Waste/Recyclable Material Storage Areas** Waste disposal pickup bins (dumpsters) shall not occupy required parking spaces nor intrude into required access driveways.	☐	☐	☐
		UTILITY AND MECHANICAL STORAGE			
84.16.080 (c)(5)	**68**	**Mechanical Equipment and Vents, Screening on Ground** Where mechanical and electrical equipment is ground-mounted, such equipment shall:			
		Not obstruct any common open space, sidewalk, or path.	☐	☐	☐
		Be screened using one or more of the following elements that will be at least the same height as the item being screened, and compliant with Section 83.02.060 (Screening and Buffering):	☐	☐	☐
		A wall utilizing the same color, texture, or material as the primary building.	☐	☐	☐
		A fence.	☐	☐	☐
		Landscaping uses a combination of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (c)(5)	**69**	**Mechanical Equipment and Vents, Screening on Roof** Where mechanical and electrical equipment is located on the roof, it shall be located so that it is not visible from any angle from the public right-of-way, and enclosed or screened using the following techniques:			
		Located at least 10 feet from the edge of the roof so that it is not visible from any portion of the nearest public right-of-way;	☐	☐	☐
		Screening constructed with one or more of the architectural materials used on the primary building; and	☐	☐	☐

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
		Screened or enclosed with materials that are at least the same height as the item being screened and compliant with the provisions set forth in Section 83.02.060 (Screening and Buffering).	☐	☐	☐

ODS #	Explanatory Note (as needed):

Exhibit B: Study Session Presentation Slides

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

Land Use Services Department

Objective Design Standards Study Session

Vincent Acuna, Planning Manager
Land Use Services Department

David Suls, Principal Planner
Michael Baker International

November 5, 2026

Agenda Item No. 2



Purpose of Study Session

- Introduce Objective Design Standards to the Planning Commission and public

- Provide an opportunity for comment

Introduction

County is required to adopt Objective Design Standards (ODS) to establish regulatory certainty and speed up housing production.

- Program 12 of Housing Element
- State Law

SB 167

Local government may not deny, reduce density, or make infeasible housing projects consistent with ODS.

SB 35

Requires approval of qualified housing projects based on ODS.

SB 330

Prohibits imposing new design standards established on or after January 1, 2020 that are not objective.

What is Objective Design Standards?

"Standards that involve **no personal or subjective judgement** by a public official and are **uniformly verifiable** by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant or proponent and the public official prior to submittal."

(California Government Code, Section 65913.4)

Subjective vs Objective

Subjective Guidelines

- Demonstrate preferences while allowing discretion and flexibility
- May cause interpretation variability

Objective Standards

- Involve no personal judgement by a decision maker
- Provide clear and measurable design requirements

Recommendations:

- *"**Should** have an attractive exterior"*
- *"**Encourage** to have shade trees"*

Requirements:

- *"**Shall** provide awnings"*
- *"**Must** provide shade"*

Objective Standards Prevents Unwanted Design







Development vs Design Standards

Development Standards

(no change)

- Regulates building use and building size
  - Height
  - Setbacks
  - Density
  - Parking requirements

Design Standards

- Focuses on building design and placement
  - Articulation/modulation
  - Roof line variation
  - Lighting
  - Landscape
  - Amenities

Applicability

- **Objective standards will only apply to:**
  - ✓ New, qualifying multiple-unit and mixed-use projects
    - *Residential-only multi-family apartments*
    - *Mixed-use projects where at least 2/3 of the project's square footage is residential*
    - *Transitional housing or supportive housing*
    - *Farmworker housing*

- **Objective standards <u>will not</u> apply to:**
  - × Detached Single-Unit Dwellings
  - × Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)
  - × Commercial and Industrial projects
  - × Multi-family projects not subject to state streamlining

Phased Implementation

PHASE 1

Incorporate PC Study Session Comments and Public Comments

DELIVERABLE:
Multifamily ODS Checklist

Winter 2026

PHASE 2

Enhance Checklist with graphics, visual aids, and diagrams.

DELIVERABLE:
Multifamily ODS Manual

Summer/Fall 2027

Converting Subjective Standards to ODS

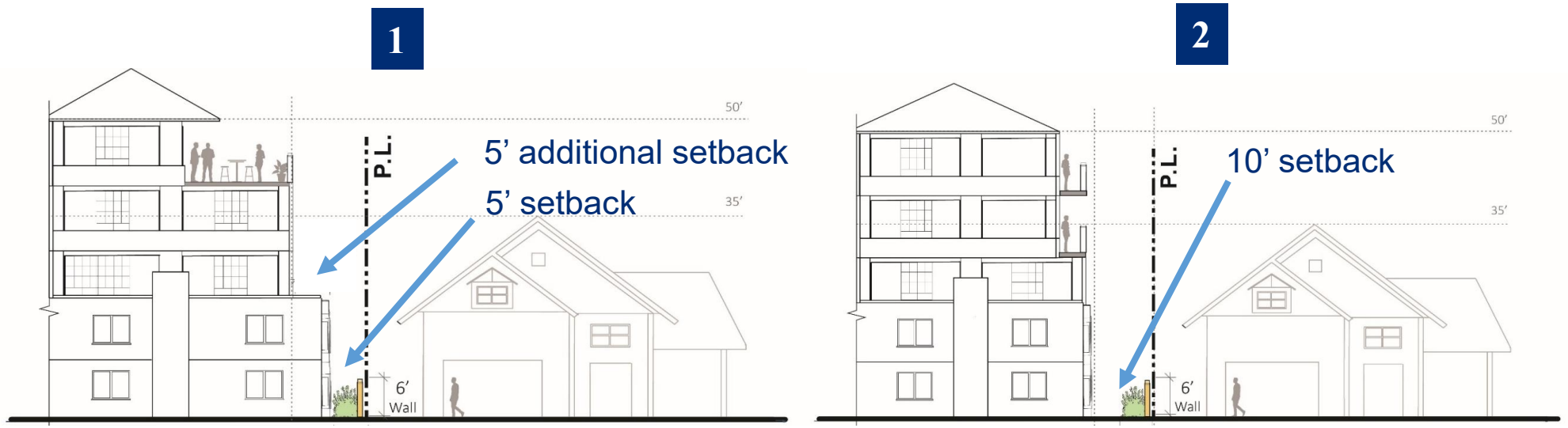
Subjective Guidelines	Objective Standards
Recommendations: - "Should" - "Encourage" - "Character" - "Adequate" - "Appropriate"	**Requirements:** - "Shall" - "Must" - "Required" - Specific criteria (dimensions, numbers, percentages)
1 A **variety** of unit types is **encouraged** (i.e., one-bedroom, two bedroom, etc.)	A **minimum of two** unit types are **required** (i.e., one-bedroom, two bedroom, etc.)
2 All support structures (e.g., laundry facilities, recreation structures, carports, garages, etc.) **should be compatible** in architectural design with the rest of the development.	All support and accessory structures (e.g., laundry facilities, recreation structures, carports, garages, etc.) **shall be** designed with **at least two components** (materials and/or architectural elements) that are the same as the primary multi-family structure(s).
3 Boxy and monotonous facades that lack human scale dimensions and have large expanses of flat wall planes **should be** prohibited.	For every **50 feet** of facade a massing break of **10 feet** in width and that is a minimum of **4 feet** in depth from the primary façade **shall be** provided.

ODS Checklist

- ODS checklist is a conversion of existing subjective guidelines to objective standards
- Can be verified with yes or no
- Code will be amended to refer to ODS checklist for qualifying multi-family projects

Code Reference		All Multi-Family Projects	Yes	No	N/A
		SITE PLANNING			
		LOCATION OF STRUCTURES			
84.16.080 (b)(3)(B)	**1**	**Solar Orientation** All south facing windows of all structures shall incorporate awnings to minimize summer solar exposure.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (a)(1)	**2**	**Facade Orientation** The primary building facade and massing shall be oriented to the primary street.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.040 (a)(3)	**3**	**Location of Entrance** The primary building entrance shall face the primary street and accessible from a public sidewalk. If not possible, the building's primary entrance shall face a pedestrian walkway that is connected to a public sidewalk.	☐	☐	☐
84.16.050 (a)(1)	**4**	**Corner Parcels** On corner parcels, both street-facing facades shall face the intersecting streets. See Figure 84-1 (Siting of Multi-Family Structure(s) Parallel to Public Right-of-Way).	☐	☐	☐
84.16.080 (b)(2)(B)	**5**	**Siting, Clustering** On sites with more than two buildings, buildings shall be clustered to provide functional and accessible common spaces, such as courtyards, pathways, paseos, and recreational areas, to all residents.	☐	☐	☐

Notable Refinements – Transitional Massing



CATEGORY	EXISTING CODE	ODS STANDARD
Transitional Massing	Structure heights at the development's edge should be considered within the context of the project's surroundings, the adjacent uses, and the distance from adjacent structures. The development's structure height should create a transition from the heights of adjacent existing residential development, rather than form abrupt height changes.	For buildings three floors or higher that are adjacent to a single-family residential zone, a transition shall be provided along the entire length of the shared property line. This shall be accomplished through a solid wall at least 6 ft in height in compliance with Chapter 83.06 and using one of the following approaches: 1. A minimum 5-foot-wide landscape area planted with landscape screening along the full length of the property line and a minimum 5-foot upper story setback from the minimum building setback for the entire adjacent façade for the third floor and above. 2. An additional 5-foot side-yard setback from the minimum building setback including a minimum 5-foot-wide landscape area planted with landscape screening along the full length of the property line.

Notable Refinements – Façade Articulation







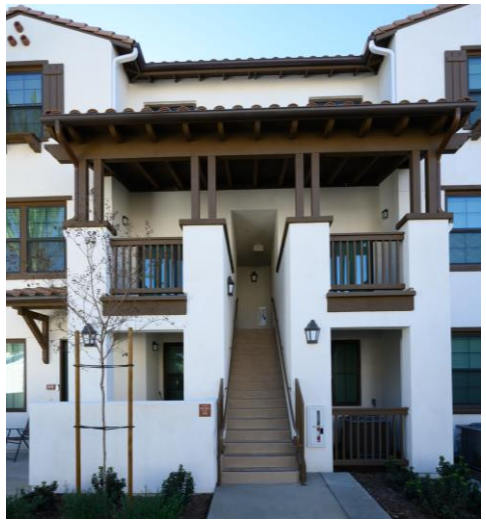
CATEGORY	EXISTING CODE	ODS STANDARD
Façade Articulation	Boxy and monotonous facades that lack human scale dimensions and have large expanses of flat wall planes should be prohibited. Architectural treatments (e.g., recessed windows, moldings, decorative trim, and wood frames) should be used to add visual interest to the facade. Windows of varied shape, size, and placement are strongly encouraged	For every 50 feet of facade a massing break of 10 feet in width and that is a minimum of 4 feet in depth from the primary façade shall be provided. All buildings two stories or more in height shall provide façade modulation through at least two of the following: • A change in façade materials, textures, and colors between the ground floor and the second floor • A change in fenestration pattern (window size, style, or placement). • A horizontal façade projection or recess at least 3 feet extending for at least 30% of the area of each façade.

Notable Refinements - Rooflines

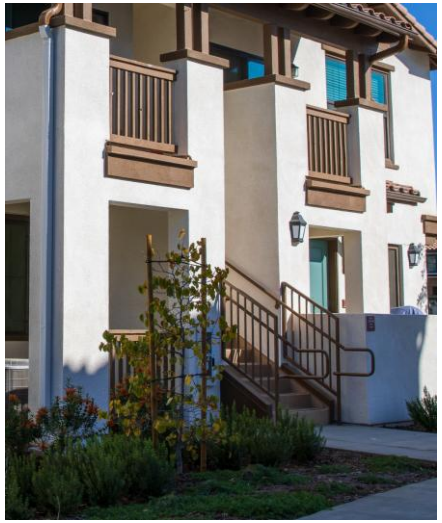


CATEGORY	EXISTING CODE	ODS STANDARD
Rooflines	Roof lines should be broken up and varied within the overall horizontal plane. Combinations of roof heights that create variation and visual interest are strongly encouraged.	Rooflines shall be vertically articulated at least 3 feet every 50 feet along the street frontage, using architectural elements such as parapets, varying cornices, reveals, clerestory windows, or varying roof height and/or form.

Notable Refinements - Entries









CATEGORY	EXISTING CODE	ODS STANDARD
Entries	Building entrances and individual dwelling unit entries shall be accentuated by architectural elements, lighting, and/or landscaping to further emphasize their private nature.	The primary building entrance shall face the primary street and accessible from a public sidewalk. If not possible, the building's primary entrance shall face a pedestrian walkway that is connected to a public sidewalk. Any residential unit on the ground floor shall have an individually recognizable entry by using two or more of the following techniques: • Weather protection element, such as an awning, canopy, or a recessed entry with a minimum recess or projection of 48 square feet in area. • Individual stoop or elevated entry. • Entry patio, terrace, or forecourt. • A minimum 3-foot change in façade depth from adjacent unit entries.

Notable Refinements – Common Open Spaces





CATEGORY	EXISTING CODE	ODS STANDARD
Common Open Space Seating	Provide a variety of seating in the sun and shade that supports social interaction and natural surveillance.	In common open space areas, three (3) seats for every 1,000 sq ft of open space shall be provided. Shade shall be provided for at least 75% of the seating through landscaping or a structure during maximum sunlight.

Notable Refinements - Lighting

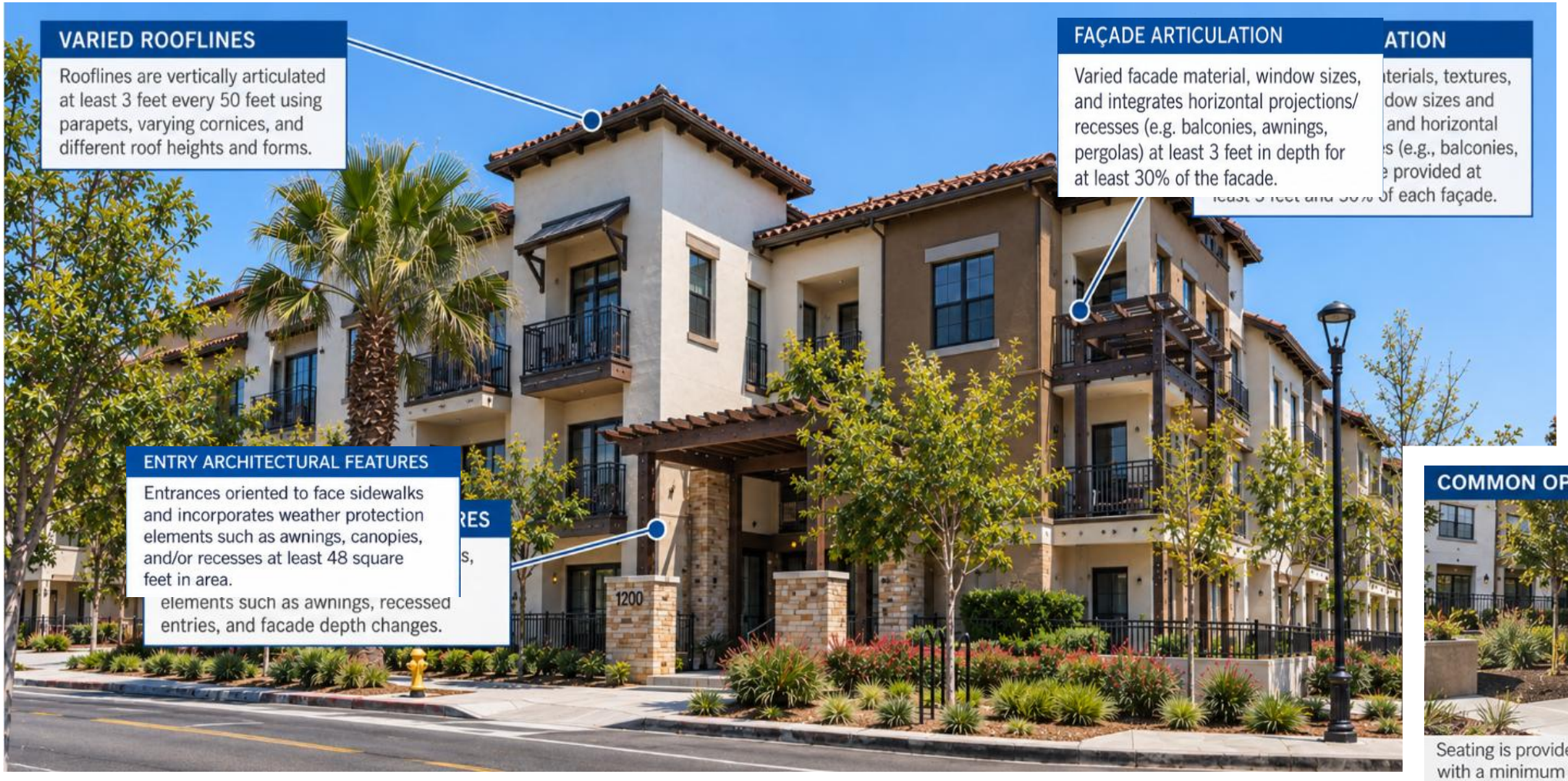






CATEGORY	EXISTING CODE	ODS STANDARD
Lighting	Lighting levels shall vary depending on the specific use and conditions, but the overall consideration shall be to provide lighting levels sufficient that intruders cannot lurk in shadows, steps and other grade changes are apparent, residents can easily unlock their door or identify visitors on their doorstep, and opportunities for theft and vandalism are reduced or eliminated.	Lighting levels shall vary depending on the specific use and conditions, but the overall consideration shall be to provide a minimum 1-foot candle illumination on all on-site sidewalks, walkways, pathways, paseos, and door/entrance thresholds.

Illustrative Example 1



COMMON OPEN SPACE SEATING



Seating is provided in common open space areas, with a minimum of three (3) seats for every 1,000 sq ft of open space. Shade is provided for at least 75% of the seating through landscaping or a structure.

Illustrative Example 2



LIGHTING



Lighting levels shall provide a minimum 1-foot candle illumination on all on-site sidewalks, walkways, pathways, paseos, and door/entrance thresholds.

Illustrative Example 3



COMMON OPEN SPACE SEATING



Seating is provided in common open space areas, with a minimum of three (3) seats for every 1,000 sq ft of open space. Shade is provided for at least 75% of the seating through landscaping or a structure.

Objective Design Standards is Flexible





Same standards, different applications



Thank you!

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY