



Ordinance Fact Sheet

March 23, 2026

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY ATTORNEY

SUBJECT: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PASADENA AMENDING TITLE 17 (ZONING CODE), CHAPTER 61 (PERMIT APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL), SECTION 17.61.030 (DESIGN REVIEW) OF THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE, AND ADDING SECTION 17.50.165 (OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR HIGH-DENSITY HOUSING) TO CHAPTER 17.50 (STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC LAND USES) TO THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE TO ADOPT OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR HIGH-DENSITY HOUSING AND MODIFY THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS FOR SUCH PROJECTS

TITLE OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PASADENA AMENDING TITLE 17 (ZONING CODE), CHAPTER 61 (PERMIT APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL), SECTION 17.61.030 (DESIGN REVIEW) OF THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE, AND ADDING SECTION 17.50.165 (OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR HIGH-DENSITY HOUSING) TO CHAPTER 17.50 (STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC LAND USES) TO THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE TO ADOPT OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR HIGH-DENSITY HOUSING AND MODIFY THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS FOR SUCH PROJECTS

PURPOSE OF THE ORDINANCE

As directed by the City Council on December 8, 2025, this ordinance amends the Zoning Code to adopt objective design standards for high-density housing, which includes residential and mixed-use development at proposed densities greater than 48 dwelling units per acre outside the RM Zoning Districts. The purpose of the ordinance is to adopt standards for development that involve no personal or subjective judgment, and to allow a consolidated concept and final design review process for such projects.

MEETING OF 03/23/2026

AGENDA ITEM NO. 19

REASONS WHY LEGISLATION IS NEEDED

Under Senate Bill 330, design standards established on or after January 1, 2020, shall be objective standards. Cities may not enact a development policy, standard, or condition that would impose or enforce design standards established on or after January 1, 2020, that are not objective.

Planning has existing development and design standards, and identified opportunities to incorporate additional objective design standards for building entries, façade detailing, fenestration, massing and materiality. This legislation is needed to implement those design standards.

PROGRAMS, DEPARTMENTS OR GROUPS AFFECTED

Planning will implement this ordinance, which makes changes citywide and that will affect various classes of permit applicants.

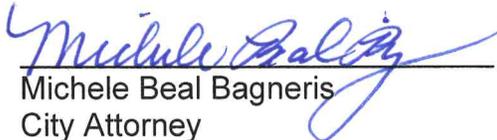
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

On December 8, 2025, the City Council found the action herein is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the “Common Sense” exemption. This exemption states that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Such is the case with the proposed amendments that create objective design standards for high-density residential development. The whole of this amendment was adequately addressed by the Council’s finding on December 8, 2025.

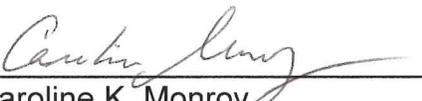
FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this ordinance amendment.

Respectfully submitted,


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City Attorney

Prepared by:


Caroline K. Monroy
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Concurred by:


MIGUEL MARQUEZ
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