



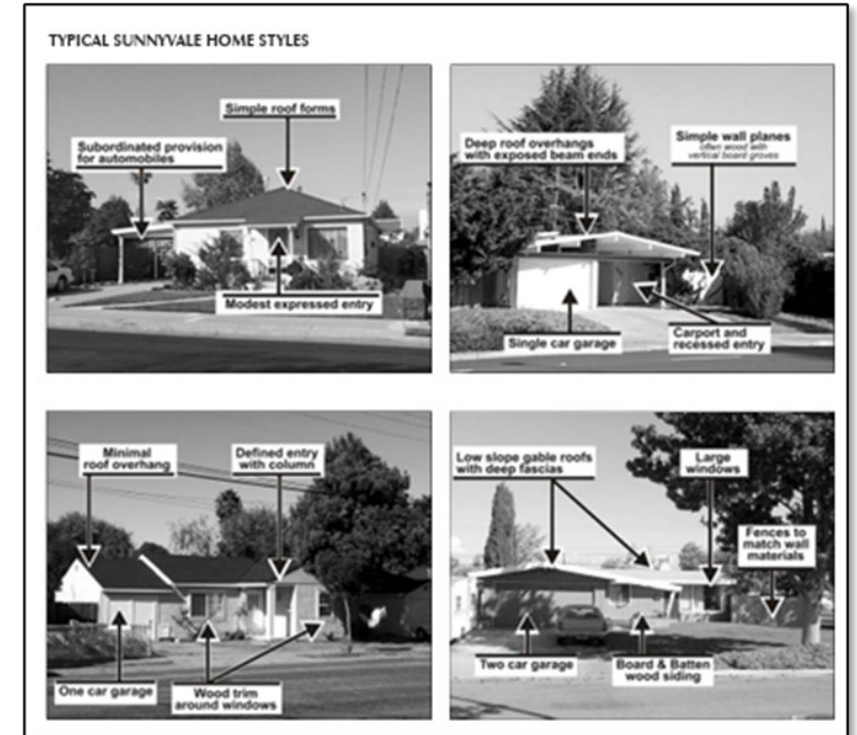
Lower Density Residential (LDR) Objective Design Standards

Aastha Vashist, Principal Planner
City Council Hearing, July 21, 2026

Overview

- Replace Single-Family Home Design Techniques
- Update sponsored in 2020:
 - ◆ City Council Study Issue Paper CDD 20-01
- **Applicability:**
 - ◆ Single-Family Dwellings*
 - ◆ Two-Family Dwellings*
 - ◆ Dual Urban Opportunity (DUO) Housing*
- **PC Hearing:** April 27, 2026

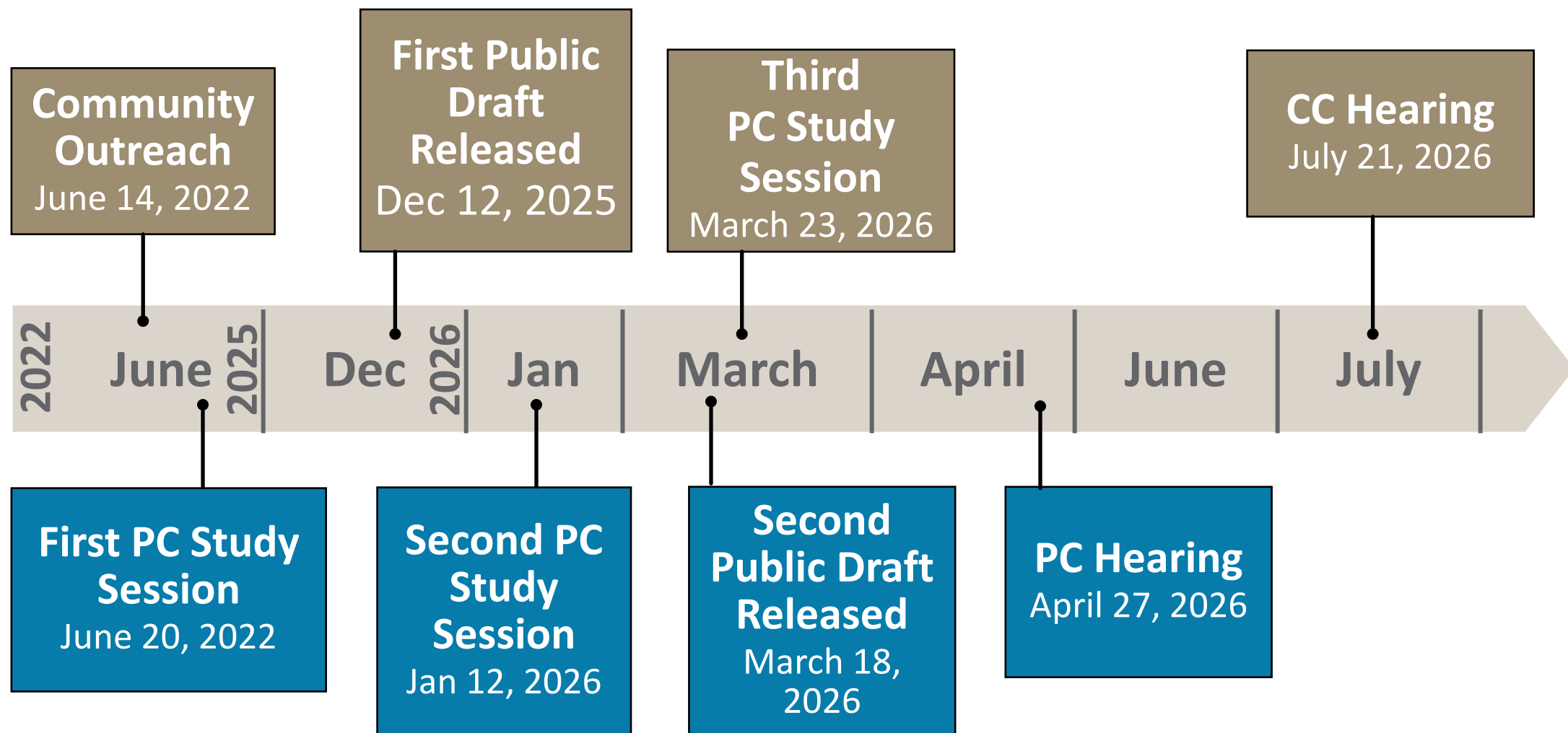
**except Eichler and Taaffe-Frances neighborhoods*



Process

- Dahlin Group (Architects & Urban Planners) hired in 2022.
- Project commenced in 2022:
 - ◆ Community outreach meeting held in June 2022
 - ◆ Three Planning Commission Study Sessions
 - ◆ First Public Draft released in December 2025
 - ◆ Public webpage launched in March 2024
 - ◆ Notifications to interested parties (including architects & designers) and neighborhood associations

Process and Timeline



Public Comment Letter

- Letter received on May 21, 2026, from Bronwyn Barry, Principal of Passive Homes BB.
- Concerns regarding:
 - ◆ Building articulation and second-floor design
 - ◆ Environmental sustainability
 - ◆ Energy efficiency
 - ◆ Thermal influx
 - ◆ Seismic safety and
 - ◆ Ability of traditional homes to comply with the proposed standards

Response to Public Comment Letter

- Planning and Building Safety staff reviewed the letter
- **No adverse impacts found on:**
 - ◆ Compliance with California Building Code
including seismic standards and thermal performance
 - ◆ Installation of renewable energy systems
 - ◆ Traditional residential design
- Green Building Program, Building Code & proposed objective design standards further City's sustainability and climate action objectives

Additional Clarifications

- Proposed Design Standards include:
 - ◆ Exceptions from majority of numerical design standards
 - ◆ Alternative Compliance
- Increased design review threshold and lot coverage allowance
- Clarifications included for following design standards:
 - ◆ 2.2.2.4. Two story Wall along Front Elevation
 - ◆ 2.2.4.1. Wall Plane Changes
 - ◆ 2.1.2. and 2.8.1. Exterior Wall Materials

Goals

LDR Objective Design Standards



Objective and measurable design standards

Streamline permit process

Promote architectural variation

Modernize document to address current trends

Sustainable design goals

Balance property owner's and neighbor's goals

Design Review Thresholds (SMC 19.32 & 19.80)

PERMIT REQUIRED	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Building Permit Only	One story additions up to 20% of existing floor area	- One story additions up to 50% of existing floor area - Exterior modifications that are not significant - Second story exterior modifications not requiring a design review
Staff Level Design Review	- New one-story homes - One story additions >20% of existing floor area - Any exterior modification facing a street	- New one-story homes - One story additions > 50% of existing floor area - Significant exterior modifications
Staff Level Design Review with noticing	- New two-story homes - Second floor additions - Any second-floor exterior modifications	- New two-story homes - Second floor additions - Certain second-floor exterior modifications
Planning Commission Design Review with hearing	New homes and additions > 45% FAR or 3,600 s.f. floor area	New homes and additions > 60% FAR

Zoning Code Updates

Lot Coverage

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) Updates

Green Building Program

City Council Policy 1.1.12

Planning Commission Recommendation

Staff Recommendation with Modifications:

- Update to related design guideline documents for consistency.
- Add further clarification text for images in Appendix A of LDRODS



Staff Recommendation

Alternative 1:

- Find that the Proposed Actions are Exempt from CEQA
- Adopt a Resolution to Establish LDR Objective Design Standards and Repeal the Single-Family Home Design Techniques*;
- Introduce an Ordinance to Amend Sunnyvale Municipal Code Title 19 (Zoning) to Amend Chapter 19.32, 19.80 and 19.79*;
- Adopt a Resolution to Update and Adopt the Green Building Tables for 2026; and
- Repeal City Council Policy 1.1.12.

**The Resolution and Ordinance have been updated to clarify that Heritage Resources are not subject to the LDR ODS*

Updates and Clarifications have been added to the LDR Objective Design Standards