

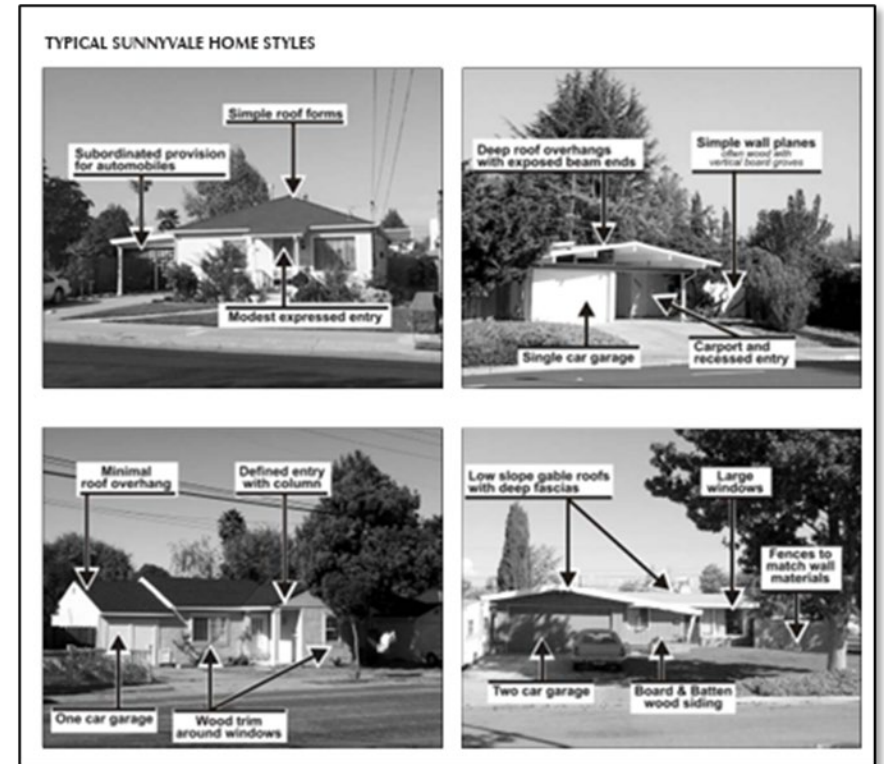


# Lower Density Residential (LDR) Objective Design Standards

Aastha Vashist, Senior Planner  
City Council Hearing, June 2, 2026

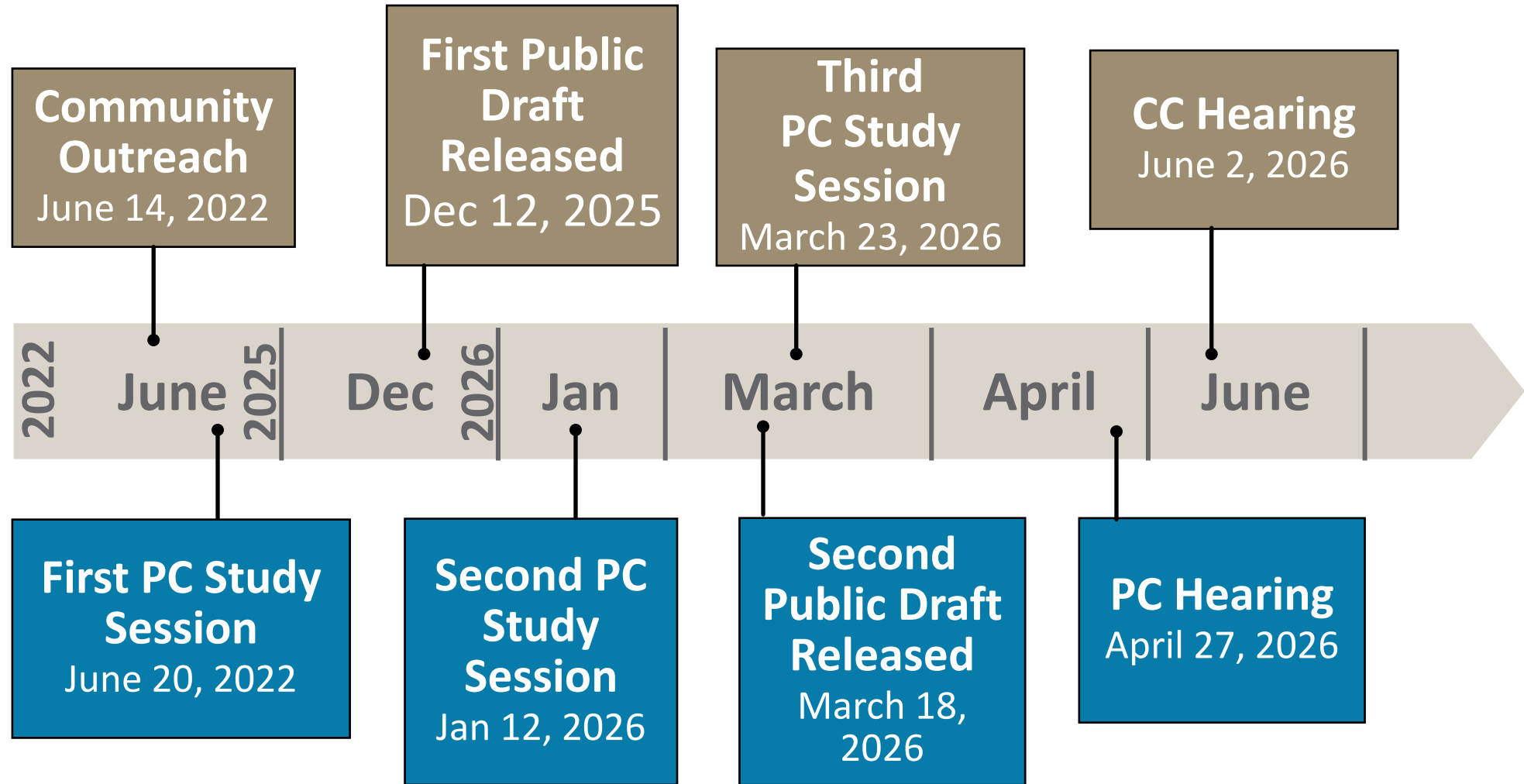
# Overview

- 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 and Timeline



# Goals

## LDR Objective Design Standards



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Objective and measurable design standards

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Streamline permit process

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Promote architectural variation

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Modernize document to address current trends

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Sustainable design goals

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Balance property owner's and neighbor's goals

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# Design Review Thresholds (SMC 19.32 & 19.80)

PERMIT REQUIRED	EXISTING	PROPOSED
<b>Building Permit Only</b>	One story additions up to 20% of existing floor area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One story additions up to 50% of existing floor area</li> <li>Exterior modifications that are not significant</li> <li>Second story exterior modifications not requiring a design review</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Level Design Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New one-story homes</li> <li>One story additions &gt;20% of existing floor area</li> <li>Any exterior modification facing a street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New one-story homes</li> <li>One story additions &gt; 50% of existing floor area</li> <li>Significant exterior modifications</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Level Design Review with noticing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New two-story homes</li> <li>Second floor additions</li> <li>Any second-floor exterior modifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New two-story homes</li> <li>Second floor additions</li> <li>Certain second-floor exterior modifications</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Commission Design Review with hearing</b>	New homes and additions > 45% FAR or 3,600 s.f. floor area	New homes and additions > 60% FAR

# Zoning Code Updates

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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*

# Backup Slides

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# ADUs (SMC 19.79)

## Compliance with state laws

- AB 543
- SB 1154

## Changes

- Owner occupancy for JADUs sharing sanitation facility with main unit
- No short-term rental for JADUs
- Timeline and requirements for determining completeness of application

# Lot Coverage (SMC 19.32)

R-0, R-1, R-1.5, R-1.7/PD & R-2 zoning districts

	Lot Coverage
<b>Existing</b>	45% for one-story 40% for two-story
<b>Proposed</b>	50%

# City Council Policy 1.1.12

Flexibility for new single-family homes on small lots

Consistent w/ R-1.5 & R-1.7/PD requirements,  
*recommends:*

- Max 50% FAR
- Maintain setbacks along the periphery
- Min. 500 s.f. usable open space

Recommend repeal as:

- Redundant with updated thresholds
- Subjective in nature

# Organization

## Chapter 1. Introduction

- Applicability
- Exceptions
- Design Principles
- Organization

## Chapter 2. Design Standards

- Architectural Style Standards
- Neighborhood Scale & Pattern Standards

## Chapter 3. Glossary

Appendix A- Architectural Style

Appendix B- Applicability Tables



# Green Building Program

## Single Family & Duplex Project

- Incentives for exceeding min. required green building standards
- Can earn incentives by:
  - achieving 120 points with Build It Green certification or
  - all-electric appliances

## Incentive

### EXISTING

Increase lot coverage by 5% or qualify for staff-level Design Review **with up to 50% FAR or 4,000 s.f. floor area**

### PROPOSED

Increase lot coverage by 5% or qualify for staff-level Design Review **with up to 65% FAR**

# Key Features

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## Exceptions

- Max 25% from most numerical standards (refer Appendix B)
- Max. 2 for staff level permits
- Max 3 for PC level permits

e.g. Entry porch height  
Max. 2' height from first floor  
With exception: 2'-3" max.

## Alternative Compliance

- Address projects with unique neighborhood context
- e.g. Side entry allowed for neighborhoods with 25% or more with same pattern.