

## 2013 Council Study Issue

**CDD 13-04 R-3 Height Requirements (non-townhouses)****Lead Department** Community Development**History** 1 year ago None 2 years ago None**1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated it?**

During the review of an apartment project by the Planning Commission there was discussion about the different height standards for townhouses and other R-3 developments.

In 2005, Council considered the study titled, "Height Limit in R-3 Zoning Districts" and made no changes to the height requirements. This was reviewed by Council again in 2006 as a part of a study on how to encourage home ownership, and the Council adopted changes to the zoning code that addresses the height of townhouses only in the R-3 zone.

Since the 2006 study, approximately 24 R-3 projects have been considered; most of the projects were townhouse style developments and by code were permitted three stories and up to 35 feet in height. Over half of these townhouse style projects were approved to exceed the 35 foot height limit by a few feet. Only three projects were for other styles of development (condominium flats and apartments). In all three of these circumstances the projects were approved with deviations to the maximum height of three stories and 30 feet (the standard for non-townhouse style developments in the R-3 zoning district). After the most recent of these projects the Planning Commission suggested this study issue to see if it is appropriate to revisit the height standard for R-3 developments.

The study would include the review of existing height requirements in Sunnyvale and in other County cities. The study would include a discussion about the purposes for different building heights, including a review of different types of construction, site constraints, and development goals, and whether flexibility can be included for different heights based on other factors (i.e. setbacks). Staff will also review criteria for flexibility to reduce the need for code deviations or variances.

**2. How does this relate to the General Plan or existing City Policy?**

- Goal LT-2 Attractive Community — Preserve and enhance an attractive community, with a positive image and a sense of place, that consists of distinctive neighborhoods, pockets of interest, and human scale development.
- GOAL CC-3 Well-designed Sites and Buildings — Private Development: Ensure that buildings and related site improvements for private development are well designed and compatible with surrounding properties and districts.

**3. Origin of issue****Board or Commission** Planning Commission**4. Staff effort required to conduct study** Moderate**Briefly explain the level of staff effort required**

Review prior projects to determine the how often height exceptions was approved as part of a project, review other cities requirements, provide outreach to public and residential developers.

**5. Multiple Year Project?** No **Planned Completion Year** 2013**6. Expected participation involved in the study issue process?**

Does Council need to approve a work plan? No  
Does this issue require review by a Board/Commission? Yes  
If so, which? Planning Commission  
Is a Council Study Session anticipated? No

**7. Briefly explain if a budget modification will be required to study this issue**

Amount of budget modification required 0

**Explanation**

**8. Briefly explain potential costs of implementing study results, note estimated capital and operating costs, as well as estimated revenue/savings, include dollar amounts**

Are there costs of implementation? No

**Explanation**

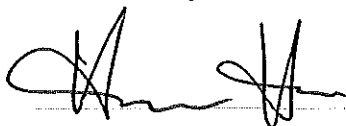
**9. Staff Recommendation**

**Staff Recommendation** Support

**If 'Support', 'Drop' or 'Defer', explain**

Staff supports the review of height standards for residential projects in the R-3 zoning districts because it would likely result in a consistent standard that provides good direction for property owners, staff and decision-makers; one that is similar to a majority of approved townhouse developments approved in recent years.

**Reviewed by**



**Department Director**

10/10/12  
**Date**

**Approved by**



**City Manager**

10-11-12  
**Date**