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RESOLUTION No. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PIEDMONT
ADOPTING OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING
UNITS, ONE-TO-FOUR UNIT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS, MULTIFAMILY
DEVELOPMENTS AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS**

WHEREAS, Piedmont's 6th Cycle Housing Element, adopted in March 2023, requires additional work to implement key programs that establish and update objective design standards (ODS) to comply with state housing mandates. While the City has already adopted ODS for accessory dwelling units and multi-family/mixed-use projects, the ongoing effort focuses on developing ODS for one-to-four-unit residential developments in single-family zones (A and E) to streamline SB 9 projects (Housing Element Program 1.J) and updating existing standards for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) multi-family/mixed-use projects to expedite approvals under state laws like SB 35 and SB 330 (Housing Element Program 4.M); and

WHEREAS, in August 2024, the City Council contracted Good City Company and its subconsultant, Van Meter Williams Pollack, to engage the community and prepare draft comprehensive ODS; and

WHEREAS, on August 12, 2024, the Planning Commission appointed Commissioners Aradhana Jajodia and Julie Ortiz to an Ad Hoc Subcommittee (ODS Subcommittee). In September 2025 Commissioner Thomas Yee replaced Commissioner Jajodia on the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee's role was to collaborate with staff and consultants to develop draft objective design standards for one-to-four-unit residential buildings and update the City's objective design standards for accessory dwelling units and multi-family and mixed-use buildings. Starting September 18, 2024, the ODS Subcommittee has met ten times to discuss the City's approach to drafting the standards, discuss the communitywide survey, review public engagement plans, provide feedback on the preliminary draft objective standards, review the public review draft of the ODS document, and finally review the public comments received and discuss any related changes. During the regular meetings of the Planning Commission, the ODS Subcommittee has verbally updated the Planning Commission and the public on the Project's progress. The subcommittee will be dissolved after the adoption of the Piedmont ODS; and

WHEREAS, State law defines objective standards as those that are measurable and verifiable, requiring no subjective judgment from public officials; and

WHEREAS, since 2020, ADU laws have changed significantly, prompting staff to re-evaluate current standards. These changes include allowing for taller 2-story ADUs and ADUs in the 20-foot street yard setback. Staff has processed several ADU and JADU applications since 2020 and have found it necessary to clarify certain existing standards. The recommended updates standardize recurring practices, such as the installation of at least one heat pump and exterior water heater, the installation of roof-mounted skylights, and other necessary modifications to the objective standards for ADUs. Although staff has not yet processed any multi-family, commercial,

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or mixed-use development projects using the current objective design standards, several areas for improvement and clarification have been identified; and

WHEREAS, the proposed objective design standards serve to streamline the review of the following eligible development applications: 1-4 Unit Residential Developments, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs), Multifamily Residential Developments, and Mixed-Use Residential Developments. The proposed Objective Design Standards are not applicable to the following development applications: single-family house remodels/additions unrelated to the development of a new housing unit and commercial developments that do not include residential units; and

WHEREAS, the overall goal of the updated standards is to provide clear guidance and design expectations to applicants, staff, and decision-makers while ensuring new multi-unit housing is designed to be sensitive and compatible with existing architecture, historic resources, streetscapes, and neighborhoods. Additionally, these standards aim to ensure that objective design requirements do not impose excessive costs on homeowners and instead facilitate housing production and affordability, all while maintaining consistent formatting throughout the document; and

WHEREAS, beginning in September 2024, the City introduced the project and sought community engagement through a series of events and opportunities starting with the Harvest Festival. This was followed by a stakeholder meeting on December 3, 2024, and a public open house on February 12, 2025. The project was later featured at the Piedmont Food Festival on April 19, 2025, which coincided with a community-wide survey conducted from April through June 2025. A second open house took place on August 21, 2025, leading into a series of Planning Commission study sessions held from August to November 2025 to discuss each ODS chapter and related amendments to City Code and Piedmont Design Standards and Guidelines. These events and the survey explored key themes related to neighborhood design and development, allowing the community to provide input on topics such as neighborhood character, preferred architectural styles and elements, the impact of new development on neighboring properties, the architectural consistency of ADUs, and the importance of landscaping, all of which informed the standards in the ODS document; and

WHEREAS, the draft ODS was made available for public review and comment from November 7 through December 7, 2025; and

WHEREAS, on January 12, 2026, the Piedmont Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing at which time it reviewed the Draft Objective Design Standards, related amendments to City Code and Piedmont Design Standards and Guidelines, the staff report and all attachments, and oral and written public comments; and

WHEREAS, Section 25.3 of the Piedmont City Code outlines the powers and duties of the Planning Commission including to consider and make recommendations to the City Council on real property, subdivisions, lot building restrictions, planning and zoning matters, matters affecting the design and aesthetics of buildings, structures and other improvements and methods of

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encouraging and promoting good design in construction in order to maintain the high quality of aesthetic values which make the City unique; and

WHEREAS, the January 12, 2026, public hearing met the requirements of Government Code Sections 65090 et. seq., 65453 and 65353, and City Code division 17.62; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, after reviewing the revised document, staff report, and all documents and public testimony received, the City Council of the City of Piedmont does hereby resolve, declare, determine and order as follows:

SECTION 1. The City Council finds that:

1. The facts set forth in the recitals in this Resolution are true and correct and hereby incorporated by this reference;
2. The recitals constitute findings in this matter and, together with the staff report, and other written reports, public testimony and other information contained in the records, are an adequate and appropriate evidentiary basis for the actions taken in this Resolution;
3. The provisions in this Resolution, as adopted, are consistent with General Plan Policies Policy 1.3 Harmonious Development, Policy 1.7 Incentives for Affordable Accessory Dwelling Units, Policy 1.9 Implement Housing Element, Policy 2.2 Mixed Use Development, Policy 2.4 Parking, Policy 6.4 Community Input, Policy 11.4 Shared Parking, Policy 13.1 Respecting Natural Terrain, Policy 14.5 Landscaping, Policy 19.3 New Development Siting, Policy 19.12 Fire Safe Regulations, 19.20 Emergency Access, Policy 29.7 Signs, Policy 28.1 Scale, Height and Bulk Compatibility, Policy 28.7 Hillside Home Design, Policy 28.10 Multifamily Design, Policy 29.5 Fence and Wall Design, Policy 29.6 Retaining Walls, Policy 29.7 Driveway and Parking Location, Policy 29.8 Exterior Lighting, Policy 1.J SB 9 Facilitation Amendments and Policy 4.M Facilitate Multi-Family and Residential Mixed-Use Projects by Right Subject to Objective Standards; the proposed Objective Design Standards and staff recommended updates to implement best and current practices; and
4. This Resolution will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience or welfare.

SECTION 2. On February 20, 2024, the City of Piedmont adopted a program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Housing Element Implementation Project (SCH 2022020362) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The proposed amendments to Piedmont City Code Chapter 17 are consistent with and fall within the scope of this adopted Housing Element Implementation EIR. The EIR comprehensively analyzed the potential environmental impacts of implementing Housing Element programs, including Program 4.M (Facilitating Multi-Family and Residential Mixed-Use Projects by Right Subject to Objective Standards) and Program 1.J (SB 9 Facilitation Amendments), both of which are directly addressed by these code amendments. Furthermore, the consideration of Objective Design Standards and related amendments to the City Code and Design Guidelines are exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3), the common-sense exception that

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CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment and 15183, projects consistent with a community plan, general plan or zoning. Other amendments including clarifying the maximum retaining wall height for SB 9 projects and updating the locations where parking is prohibited on single family residential properties in Zone A and E are also exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15601(b)(3), the common-sense exception that the proposed amendments are aesthetic in nature, do not increase development capacity, and do not authorize any specific development. Future projects will still be subject to site-specific environmental review.

SECTION 3. Revisions to Objective Design Standards [Exhibit A]

A. The City Council ~~recommends~~approves the following changes to the text of the Piedmont Objective Design Standards as recommended by the Planning Commission:

1. Section 2.10.3 Plants (agenda report page 57): This section provides objective standards for plant sizes, spacing, species, location and amount of landscape coverage for 1-4-unit developments. In response to the public comments, staff and the ODS subcommittee recommends that the language describing the type of planting allowed be revised from native, low water usage and meeting Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance to plants that are climate appropriate to avoid being too restrictive and offer flexibility in plant selection. See revised language below:

~~“S.2.10.3.b Plant species shall be native, low water usage, and low maintenance, meeting Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance requirements~~ **be selected from the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) document *Plants and Landscapes for Summer Dry Climates* (as may be amended from time to time).”**

2. Section 5.1 Definitions (agenda report page 159): Currently, the definition of “Landscape/Landscaping” includes hardscape materials such as gravel. In contrast, Chapter 17 (Planning and Land Use) of the City’s Zoning Ordinance excludes hardscape, defining landscaping only as areas capable of supporting live plant growth. To ensure internal consistency and address public comments, staff and the ODS subcommittee recommend revising the ODS definition to align with the Zoning Ordinance. See revised language below:

“Landscape/Landscaping. Pervious areas containing organic and inorganic elements. It includes but is not limited to xeriscaping, soft landscape (organic elements such as plants, soil, mulch, trees, shrubs), and hard landscape (inorganic elements such as rocks, pathways, and bricks). The planting, irrigation, and maintenance of land with living plant and other organic materials.”

3. Section 1.5.2.1 (agenda report page 32): Section 1.5.2 outlines submittal requirements for 1–4-unit projects, including the mandate for a Site Survey and Topographic Map. Currently, these must be prepared within 12 months of submission. In response to public comments, staff and the ODS subcommittee recommend extending this validity

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period to 36 months. This change aligns with industry best practices and provides greater flexibility for project development timelines. See revised language below:

“S.1.5.2.1. Site Survey and Topographic Map (preferred scale 1/8”)

Provide a survey and topographic map, prepared within the last ~~12~~ **36** months, accurately showing contours and other features of the existing terrain within the subdivision or parcel, existing drainage channels, roads, culverts, overhead and underground utility lines and structures (Sewer, Gas, Water, Electric) which affect the design of the subdivision or parcel, wells and springs, structures, retaining walls, show building wall outlines, show spot grade elevations at building corners, show existing floor elevations; show existing roof eave and roof peak elevations; show easements; provide contour lines at a minimum of 2 ft. intervals, significant trees with a minimum of 12” trunk diameter, irrigation ditches, utility poles, other improvements in their correct location, and provide a north arrow. Elevations shall be in accord with U. S. Geological Survey (1929 Sea Level datum.) The map shall be drawn to an engineer’s scale large enough to show all information clearly.”

4. Section 2.19.3 (agenda report page 70): This section defines standards for wood and fiber cement siding, covering both horizontal and vertical profiles such as shingles, shiplap, and board and batten. It requires a minimum 6-inch exposure for boards, uniform spacing for vertical layouts, and mandates that all materials be factory-finished or fully treated on all six sides. Based on public comment, staff and ODS Subcommittee recommend deleting the 6-inch requirement for board siding in this standard as in present day the siding thickness can vary anywhere between 3-6 inches and new application techniques are continually developed. See revised language below:

“S.2.19.3 Wood and Fiber Cement Siding

Wood siding includes horizontal siding consisting of shakes, shingles, shiplap, tongue and groove, v-groove, or lapped profiles in wood or materials that emulate wood such as fiber cement. Vertical siding includes board and batten or v-groove profiles in wood or materials that emulate wood such as fiber cement.

- ~~Board siding materials shall provide a minimum exposure of 6 inches.~~
- Board Siding Materials shall either be factory finished; or stained or primed and painted on all six sides.
- Vertical board or board and batten siding should be detailed with uniform exposure widths.”

5. Section 2.7.4, Section 3.2.5 and Figure 3.2.4 (agenda report pages 51 & 78): These sections establish standards for fire-safe landscaping and fencing for ADUs and 1–4-unit developments. While they previously required projects to meet Zone Zero (0–5 ft ember-resistant zone) standards, staff and the Fire Chief now recommend eliminating this requirement. This change follows the City’s reclassification out of the High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and aligns the ODS with the recently adopted Building Code, which no longer mandates Zone Zero compliance. See revised language below:

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“S.2.7.4 Side and Rear Yard Fencing

Fencing up to 6 feet in height is allowed outside the street yard setback, provided ~~portions closer 5 feet or closer to the building are made of noncombustible materials (as defined in the California Building Code)~~ **meets the fire safe vegetation requirements as determined by the Piedmont Fire Marshall and as specified in the Wildland Urban Interface Fire Code, Part 7 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations.**”

“S.3.2.5 Fire Safe Landscaping and Fencing

~~Construction of any ADU or JADU shall be designed to meet fire safe vegetation requirements as determined by the Piedmont Fire Marshal. This includes (but is not limited to) eliminating vegetation and/or wooden fencing within 5 feet of all sides of the structure.~~ **Construction of any ADU or JADU shall be designed to meet the fire safe vegetation requirements as determined by the Piedmont Fire Marshal and as specified in the Wildland Urban Interface Fire Code, Part 7 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations.**”

6. Chapter 2.4 Building Access and Entrance Design (agenda report pages 45 & 64): The ODS subcommittee noted that Section 2.4 and Section 2.15 share identical titles ("Building Access and Entrance Design") and similar purpose statements, which may cause confusion. To differentiate them, staff recommends refocusing Section 2.4 on site planning (access and visibility from the public realm) and Section 2.15 on architectural design (the physical treatment of the entrance). Additionally, Figure 2.4.1 should be moved to Section 2.15 to better illustrate building design, while a new image depicting site access and entrance orientation should be added to Section 2.4. Finally, this Section 2.4 title change will also be reflected in the document's Table of Content. See revisions below:

“2.4 ~~Building~~ Site Access and Entrance Visibility ~~Design~~”

PURPOSE

~~Well designed and easily accessible building entrances perform a key role in the overall design and character of neighborhoods.~~

~~Entrances visible from the street help to animate neighborhoods and make them safe and walkable. Building entrances include doorways and elements such as stoops stairways, *landings*, and porches. They add visual interest to the building and *streetscape*.~~

Well-designed site access ensures that entrances and access points are clearly visible, easily identifiable, and safely accessible from the public street. New development should promote intuitive pedestrian access, enhance safety and

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wayfinding, and reinforce a residential streetscape by orienting building entries toward the street or other clearly defined common access areas.”

“2.15 Building Access and Entrance Design

Figure 2.15.1 Primary building entrances must include weather protection, such as a covered porch.”

B. In addition, City Council approves the following changes to the text of the Piedmont Objective Design Standards as recommended by Staff:

1. Chapter 2.4 Building Access and Entrance Design (agenda report page 45): Staff recommends modifying standard S.2.4.1.c to make it objective. See revision below:

~~“e. All buildings not fronting a street must have their entry facing or visible from the street or a walkway connecting to the street (see Fig. 2.4.2).~~

c. All building entrances not located along public right-of-way shall have a walkway as indicated in S.2.4.2 connecting the entrance to the public right-of-way.”

2. Chapter 2.5 Vehicular Access and Parking S.2.5.3 (agenda report page 47): Staff recommends modifying standard S.2.5.3 to make it objective and measurable. See revision below:

“S.2.5.3 Driveway Turn-Arounds

Driveways that exceed the maximum backup distance shall have a turnaround area immediately adjacent to the front wall of the garage or carport. ~~The turnaround shall be adequate in size to allow a standard vehicle one (1) two-point maneuver and an exit onto a public street in a forward direction.~~ **The turnaround shall be consistent with the minimum dimensions provided in Figure 2.5.1 Driveway turnarounds**

■ One (1) two-point maneuver consists of one (1) forward motion and one (1) backward motion (See Figure 2.5.1: Driveway turnarounds).”

3. Chapter 2.12 Massing, Form, and Scale (Agenda Report page 59): Staff recommends changing the title of this section to reflect the objective standards that this section regulates. This section regulates the allowable building types. See revision below:

“Chapter 2.12 Massing, Form, and Scale-Building Types”

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4. Chapter 2.13 Roof Form and Design (Agenda Report page 61): Staff recommends amending standard S.2.13.1 to provide additional clarity to the reader. See revision below:

“S.2.13.1 Roof Articulation

~~Rooflines twenty five feet or longer that face a street or an adjacent residential use shall be articulated with recessed or projecting gabled roof elements, roof dormers, changes in roof heights, changes in direction or pitch of roof slopes, and other similar methods.~~
Rooflines 25 feet or longer that face the street or adjacent residential use shall include at least one of the following elements described below to prevent one contiguous plane:

a. recessed or projecting gabled roof elements

b. roof dormers

c. changes in roof heights

changes in direction or pitch of roof slopes”

5. Chapter 2.14 Façade Articulation (Agenda Report page 63): Staff recommends adding a clear reference defining what variations in roof forms are allowed to better clarify allowable horizontal articulation standards. See revision below:

“S.2.14.1 Horizontal Articulation

a. Facades over 25 feet in length (measured parallel to the street) must include at least one horizontal wall plane offset of at least 2 feet.

b. Articulation must occur at a minimum interval of every 20 to 30 feet.

c. Acceptable methods of articulation are:

■ Projecting or recessed bays, at least 2 feet in depth

■ Building step-backs, at least 2 feet in depth

■ Covered porches, stoops, or loggias with a minimum depth of at least three feet and a minimum horizontal area of thirty square feet

■ Variation in roof form as provided in S.2.13.1.”

6. Chapter 2.15 Building Access and Entrance Design (Agenda Report Page 64): Staff recommends two revisions in this Chapter to increase objectivity of the standards. See revisions below:

“S.2.15.1 Individual Unit Expression

~~Each dwelling must have a distinct entry, visible and oriented toward the street, or a pedestrian walkway, or common open space.~~

Each dwelling must have a distinct entry and pedestrian walkway as provided in S.2.4.”

“S.2.15.3 Addressing Standards

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New and existing buildings shall be provided with approved address identification:

- a. The address identification shall be legible and placed in a position that is visible from the street or road fronting the property.
- b. Address identification characters shall be clearly distinguishable from their background by ensuring the characters are a light color on a dark background, or a dark color on a light background.
- c. Address numbers shall be Arabic numbers or alphabetical letters. Numbers shall not be spelled out.
- d. Each character shall be not less than 4 inches high with a minimum stroke width of 1/2 inch.
- e. Where required by the ~~fire code official~~ **Fire Code**, address identification shall be provided in additional approved locations to facilitate emergency response.
- f. Where access is by means of a private road and the building cannot be viewed from the public way, a monument, pole or other sign or means shall be used to identify the structure.
- g. Address identification shall be maintained and remain in perpetuity.”

7. Chapter 2.20 Parking Design (Agenda Report Page 72): Staff recommends revising the proposed draft standard S.2.20.7.c to add clarity. See revision below:

“S.2.20.7 **Carports**

- a. Carports shall be located behind or to the side of the primary structure.
- b. Carports shall utilize the same materials and have the same paint colors as the primary structure.
- c. ~~Structural supports (posts/columns) must be designed as finished architectural elements (e.g., wood, steel, or masonry — no unfinished metal poles).~~ **Structural supports shall not be unfinished metal poles and must be designed as finished architectural elements (e.g. wood, steel or masonry).**
- d. Trash and storage areas within or adjacent to carports must be enclosed with fire-resistant construction or screened from view, and must be outside the required parking space minimum dimensions.”

~~B.C.~~ The City Council hereby approves the Objective Design Standards, attached as **Exhibit A**, and with the changes described in Section 3.A and 3.B above.

SECTION 4. All portions of this resolution are severable. If an individual component of this Resolution is adjudged by a court to be invalid and unenforceable, then the remaining portions will continue in effect.

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