

# Objective Design Standards

“How to Apply Objective Standards to Comply with State Law and Retain Local Control”

League of Cities  
Planning Commissioners Academy  
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WHA.

ALL CORNERS MET

Orange County

Los Angeles

Sacramento

Bay Area

# ODS Purpose

“A design standard that involve **no personal or subjective judgment** by a public official and are uniformly **verifiable** by reference to an **external and uniform benchmark or criterion** available and knowable by both the development applicant or proponent and the public official prior to submittal.” (California Government Code, Section 65913.4)

= Clear and measurable design requirements.

- Predictable input/predictable output.
- Consistent review outcome.

# ODS Scoop

- SB35 – tool for streamlining residential development.
  - Other relevant legislation: SB330, AB2668, SB9, SB6, AB2011
- Applies to multi-family and mixed-use developments.
- Rooted in ‘place.’
- Prescriptive and flexible.
- Easy to understand, easy to apply, easy to administer.

# Shall vs Should

## Objective Standards

Black & White

Streamline Review

Measurable, quantifiable,  
easily defined, and  
enforceable

“Shall”

VS

## Design Guidelines

Subjective

Recommendation (not  
enforceable)

Unmeasurable and up for  
interpretation

“Should”

# ODS Elements

- Tailored to the City!
- Site Design
- Building Envelope
- Building Design & Articulation
- Open Space
- Landscape
- Architectural Style

# ODS Methods

- True/False
- Counts & Measurements
- Ratios & Calculations
- Lists
- Scorecards
- Benchmarks & Performance Measures

# ODS Methods

## Ratio & Calculations

- Each home shall have private open space equal to 10% of the conditioned floor area.
- Ground floor commercial (mixed-use) exterior walls, facing plaza/street, shall include windows/doors for 75% of the wall area.

## Lists

All residential entryways shall incorporate at least two of the following elements:

- The entry shall have a porch of at least 3 feet in depth.
- The entryway shall be designed with an overhead projection of at least 12 inches.
- The entryway shall be marked with a side lite window panel or door with a window.

# ODS Examples

## Scorecards

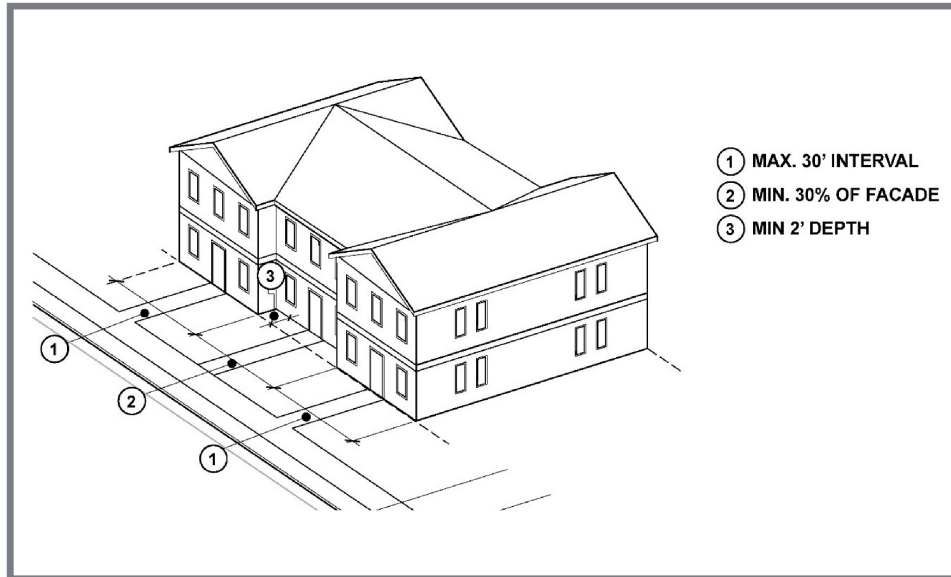
Plant Type Size	Plant Container	Points
Shrub	1-gallon container	1.0
	1-gallon container	2.0
	15-gallon container or larger	10.0
Tree	5-gallon	5.0
	15-gallon	10.0
	24-inch box	20.0
	36-inch box	50.0

## Benchmarks & Performance Measures

- Development must meet the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) by achieving CALGreen Tier I or II as adopted by the State of CA.



# ODS Examples



Graphic Source: City of Gilroy Objective Design Standards

Example: Massing and Articulation

Public view into green court  
Private open space with front access opening to green court  
Front doors connecting to sidewalks



Example: Site Design and Building Envelope

# ODS Examples



Example: Architectural Style

Elements	Standards (5 minimum)
Roof Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hip OR gable roofs OR flat roof with parapet walls</li> <li>• Roof pitches 3.5:12 to 5:12</li> <li>• Tight rake, where used</li> </ul>
Roof Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concrete "S" tile</li> </ul>
Architectural Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Round top OR arched primary window OR architectural feature</li> <li>• Shed roof accent feature</li> <li>• Recessed openings at front entry OR porch</li> <li>• Balcony</li> </ul>
Wall Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium sand float stucco finish (16/20)</li> <li>• Decorative ceramic tile OR material accents</li> </ul>
Trim & Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decorative metal elements (pot shelf, gate, balcony, etc.)</li> <li>• Wood beam accents, especially at porch</li> <li>• Wall mounted light fixtures at garage door and front entry</li> </ul>
Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vertically proportioned windows</li> <li>• Recessed feature windows</li> <li>• Divided lights</li> <li>• Round top windows</li> </ul>
Doors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel or with Glazing</li> <li>• Rectangular or Arched</li> </ul>

# THANK YOU

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