

PALM DESERT CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, March 27, 2025

2:45 p.m.

Council Chamber, City Hall

73-510 Fred Waring Drive

Palm Desert, California

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the purpose of the Study Session is to review the items listed on the agenda. No action will be taken.

This is a joint meeting of the Palm Desert City Council, Successor Agency to the Palm Desert Redevelopment Agency, Palm Desert Housing Authority, and Palm Desert Board of Library Trustees. Pursuant to Assembly Bill 2449, this meeting may be conducted as a hybrid meeting allowing public access via teleconference or in person, and up to two Councilmembers may attend remotely.

WATCH THE MEETING LIVE: Watch the City Council meeting live at the City's website: <https://palmdesert.zoom.us/> or on the City's [YouTube Channel](#).

OPTIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS MEETING:

Send your comments by email to: CityClerk@palmdesert.gov.

Emails received prior to 10:00 a.m. on the day of the City Council meeting will be made part of the record and distributed to the City Council. Emails will not be read aloud at the meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER - STUDY SESSION

2. STUDY SESSION TOPICS

**2.a UPDATE ON THE HILLSIDE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS
PROJECT CASE NO. ZOA25-0001**

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive an update on the Zoning Ordinance Amendment related to establishing Hillside Objective Design Standards.
2. Provide input on the proposed considerations for the Hillside Objective Design Standards.

2.b UPDATE ON THE CITY SEAL REDESIGN PROCESS

33

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file an update on the City Seal redesign process.

3. ADJOURNMENT

4. PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTE: Pursuant to Assembly Bill 2449, this meeting may be conducted by teleconference. Study Session is accessible in person or on the City's website: www.palmdesert.gov under the Council Agenda link at the top of the page.

Agenda Related Materials: Pursuant to Government Code §54957.5(b)(2) the designated office for inspection of records in connection with this meeting is the Office of the City Clerk, Palm Desert Civic Center, 73-510 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert. Staff reports for all agenda items considered in open session, and documents provided to a majority of the legislative bodies are available for public inspection at City Hall and on the City's website at www.palmdesert.gov by clicking "Meeting Agendas" at the top of the page.

Americans with Disabilities Act: It is the intention of the City of Palm Desert to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in all respects. If, as an attendee or a participant at this meeting, or in meetings on a regular basis, you will need special assistance beyond what is normally provided, the City will attempt to accommodate you in every reasonable manner. Please contact the Office of the City Clerk, (760) 346-0611, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to inform us of your needs and to determine if accommodation is feasible.

AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

I, Michelle Nance, Acting Assistant City Clerk of the City of Palm Desert, do hereby certify, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California, that the foregoing agenda for the Palm Desert City Council, Successor Agency for the Palm Desert Redevelopment Agency, and Housing Authority, was posted on the City Hall bulletin board and City website www.palmdesert.gov no less than 72 hours prior to the meeting.

/S/ Michelle Nance
Acting Assistant City Clerk

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: March 27, 2025

PREPARED BY: Nick Melloni, AICP, Principal Planner

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE HILLSIDE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS
PROJECT CASE NO. ZOA25-0001

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive an update on the Zoning Ordinance Amendment related to establishing Hillside Objective Design Standards.
2. Provide input on the proposed considerations for the Hillside Objective Design Standards.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

On May 21, 2024, the City of Palm Desert entered into a professional services agreement (Contract No. A47670) with John Kaliski Architects (Consultant), of Los Angeles, California, to assist in the preparation of objective design standards (ODS) for the Downtown area and Hillside areas. At this time, the scope of Hillside ODS is the primary focus and the Downtown ODS will continue at a future time.

The Santa Rosa Mountains and its foothills, which are located in the south and south-western areas of the City of Palm Desert, have long been recognized by the city as important scenic resource areas. The city has enacted land use policies and development regulations to minimize impacts on the scenic characteristic of the hillside by requiring sensitive grading techniques, architectural design requirements, and discretionary council approval. These existing regulations related to design consist of subjective guidelines, which are open to wide interpretation among landowners, staff and decision makers, such as:

PDMC 25.10.050(2)(b) Architecture and landscape design which blends with the natural terrain to the greatest practical extent.

PDMC 25.10.050(2)(c) Retention and protection of undisturbed viewsheds, natural landmarks, and features including vistas and the natural skyline as integral elements.

To ensure future development of the hillside is given clear design parameters for stakeholders, the Development Services Department will work with JKA to prepare Objective Design Standards based on direction from the City Council, City Council Subcommittee for the Hillside ODS, Planning Commission, and public input. In this study session, JKA will provide an overview of the existing hillside setting, and considerations for City Council's input.

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact to the General Fund related to this action.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Memorandum of Preliminary Assessment, Findings, and Considerations
2. Hillside ODS Study Session Presentation

March 20, 2025

MEMORANDUM

Preliminary Assessment, Findings, and Considerations Development and Design in Palm Desert's Hillside Areas

The Hillside Area Objective Design Standards Project

John Kaliski Architects ("Consultant") was retained by the City of Palm Desert ("City") in May 2024 to prepare Downtown and Hillside Objective Design Standards ("ODS"). ODS are design-oriented development standards that are measurable and quantifiable and used to establish baseline design criteria and parameters for projects.

To date, the Consultant has concentrated on completing a preliminary review of materials for the City's hillside areas, including existing ordinances and design standards for the Hillside Planned Residential (HPR) zoning district. Additionally, the Consultant had the opportunity to tour hillside areas with City staff ("Staff") on February 21, 2025, and see existing conditions in the western and southern portions of the City.

This memorandum, in anticipation of a City Council Study Session to be held on March 27, 2025, outlines some preliminary Consultant observations, findings, and considerations for review and comment by decision-makers at the Study Session that will help establish priorities and outcomes for the hillside planned residential areas.

To develop the findings and consideration below, in addition to the review of City materials such as the General Plan and Zoning Code, the Consultant also reviewed a selection of hillside standards in other locales including the following:

- Blaine County, Idaho (see [ORD No. 2023 - 10 Title 10](#))
- Los Angeles Hillside Ordinance (see [LAMC Sec. 12.21.17 1-Fam DUs, Acc. Bldgs. & Adds. Hillside Regs.](#))
- Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan (see [LA ORD. No. 167,943](#))
- Palm Springs, California (see [Palm Springs ZC Sec. 93.13.00 Hillside developments](#))
- Pitkin County, Colorado (see [Pitkin CO. Design Standards. 7-20-120](#))
- Salt Lake County, Utah (see [Salt Lake CO Foothills and Canyons Overlay Zone](#))
- Santa Barbara, California ([SB Planning Hillside Housing Development](#))

The Consultant found that each of these jurisdictions has developed standards, for instance the visibility of a structure from a designated viewshed, that when taken in total suggested that a more robust approach to hillside topics on a topic-by-topic basis is possible. This suggests that Palm Desert has an opportunity, based upon community and decision-maker input, to craft more design standards that address this city's constraints and opportunities for single-family hillside development. Implementation of additional ideas that establish an agreed upon community baseline for more certainty as relates to hillside development may be addressed both through the ongoing evolution of the City's Unified Development Code (UDC) which generally provides for development standards or through the development of parallel objective design standards, which can either be adopted as a stand-alone document, or incorporated into the UDC.

Existing Hillside Conditions

The Palm Desert hillside is composed of two existing contexts. In the West Hills area, privately-owned parcels developed with single-family land uses are scattered throughout the hillside, while Stone Eagle and Canyons at Bighorn are planned communities that make up the majority of the southern hillside area. In both the southern and western portions of Palm Desert, views to and from the mountains across single-family zones dominate the City's landscape and establish the City's identity, which is characterized by its unique desert setting and landscape. The City acknowledges the value of this identity in its General Plan with the following key open space preservation and hillside development goals.

- **Land Use & Community Character Policy 1.2: Open space preservation.** Balance the development of the City with the provision of open space, and especially the hillsides surrounding the City, so as to create both high quality urban areas and high-quality open space.

Two additional General Plan goals further define the City’s approach to hillside areas and development.

- **Land Use & Community Character Policy 1.5: Hillside development.** Limit development and grading in areas with slopes greater than 20% and limit the density and intensity of development in areas with slopes of between 10 and 19 percent.
- **Environmental Resources Policy 2.3: Hillside grading.** Continue to require the preparation of a grading analysis on hillside development to pre-determine where development should occur so as to minimize the impact of new development of the city’s hillsides.

The policy to “...minimize the impact of new development of the city’s hillsides,” is a primary focus for the Hillside ODS study. ODS can establish more tools that the City can utilize to establish a framework for community expectations of the definition of quality development in the hillsides.

The City regulates hillside design with development standards (see [PD Zoning Sec. 25.10.050A HPR development standards](#)). These include general grading goals to preserve the natural contours of the land, blend in with the natural terrain, and protect viewsheds. Flat building pads and associated grading disturbance are limited to 10,000 SF in size, while residences are not to exceed 4,000 SF inclusive of garages and accessory buildings. At building pads that were developed before passage of these regulations, lot coverage of structures at these pads is limited to 35%. This can be increased to 50% coverage with the approval of the City’s Architectural Review Commission (ARC). Given the many ridges that are visible throughout much of Palm Desert, development is prohibited on or across ridges.

While by code (see [PD Zoning Sec. 25.68.020](#)) the ARC does not review typical single-family residences, the ARC often reviews these projects if it is in a hillside area and exceeds 35% of a previously approved building pad. Staff may also initiate a request for ARC review of a single-family residence (see [PD Zoning Sec. 25.68.030](#)). In practice, there are few new building pads in the hillside areas, and larger homes are often proposed in the hillside planned residential districts that exceed UDC thresholds. These are triggering ARC, Planning Commission, and City Council review of the single-family development type within the hillsides. While a baseline of character, fit, and aesthetic concerns for hillside design may be addressed by additional Palm Desert-specific design standards to meet community goals, to fully establish a clear and certain design path for the hillsides requires careful coordination of objective design standard recommendations, and the development requirements and processes of the City’s UDC. As work is simultaneously underway to improve the UDC, JKA anticipates coordinating its design standards and guidelines recommendations and work products with this parallel UDC effort to help ensure a coordinated set of development and design approaches, standards, and if appropriate guidelines.

To ensure that the Consultant has a directed understanding of community concerns, the following Consultant observations and considerations of hillside conditions are offered and provide an opportunity for comment and input that will shape the work and outcomes of this hillside-oriented planning process.

Hillside Observations and Considerations for Discussion

The following observations and considerations are provided to facilitate input and direction to the Consultant during the Study Session to guide the subsequent development of work product and Project outcomes. These findings and considerations are not exhaustive but represent the Consultant’s first round of observations and considerations. Identification and review of other topics and concerns that should be addressed are welcome.

1. **Views To Hillsides:** Views of the hillsides and mountains from the City are iconic, but due to ongoing single-family development, hillsides are increasingly subject to change in a manner that decreases the conservation of the hillside setting due to grading and siting of building pads.
Consideration: Develop more robust viewshed standards to the hillsides from roadways and streets and across the

field of view of larger developments.

2. **Views From Hillsides:** Views from the mountainsides and hills to the City are spectacular but there are cases where these views are compromised by subsequent development in the hillsides.
Consideration: Standards for hillside building pads, pads in relationship to ridgelines, access roads and drives, and the screening and visibility of new construction could further reduce the visibility of new homes and conserve viewsheds from and across the mountain sides. Additionally, more robust standards for individual developments in the hillsides that address the fit and character of development could be developed. Areas where standards could be further expanded include, but are not limited to:
 - *Grading extent,*
 - *Height in relationship to ridgelines,*
 - *Roofline silhouette(s),*
 - *Extent of scale, mass, bulk and transparency,*
 - *Use of color(s),*
 - *Use of material(s), and*
 - *Extent of visible exterior lighting.*
3. **Use of Native Landscape:** The native desert landscape of the hillsides contributes significantly to the sense of place and identity of both the mountains and the city, but present landscape standards do not fully incorporate use of native and similar flora requirements.
Consideration: Develop more robust standards for landscape in the hillside areas that conserves and fosters the native landscape characteristic of these locations.
4. **Cluster Development:** Planned single-family residential developments emphasize individual lot development as opposed to cluster development that maintains more conserved open space.
Consideration: Develop incentives for clustering of development in hillside areas that conserves more open space and/or conservation easements for sloped areas where new grading cannot occur.
5. **Site Access Standards** Existing roads in some of the hillside areas do not meet minimum access standards that ensure life safety access. In some hillside areas, evidence of erosion due to water flow is visible and utilities are exposed.
Consideration: Develop more base standards and requirements for individual property development in relationship to access, fire safety, flooding, and utilities that ensure life safety for both residents and first responders.

If you have any questions or comments with regard to this memorandum, please contact Planning Staff, Nick Melloni, Principal Planner at nmelloni@palmdesert.gov, and John Kaliski and Amee Bhatt at jkaliski@jka-la.com and abhett@jka-la.com respectively.



**PALM DESERT
HILLSIDE OBJECTIVE
DESIGN STANDARDS**

EXISTING CONDITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES REPORT

March 2025

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Prepared by:

JK A

IN THIS REPORT

- ♦ Existing Regulations
- ♦ Summary of Key Issues
- ♦ Hillside Precedents
- ♦ Consultant Considerations
- ♦ Questions for the City Council

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- ♦ Explore, understand, and define the **built form and character of hillside development in Palm Desert.**
- ♦ Optimize **engagement** with residents, City staff, and decision-makers to understand expectations of **hillside development.**
- ♦ Translate community values into **objective design standards** that **foster the natural identity of the hillside** and acknowledge the **balance between nature and development.**



PROJECT TIMELINE

PROJECT INITIATION & EXISTING CONDITIONS

- ☒ Project Kickoff
- ☒ Hillside Tour with City Staff
- ☒ Existing Conditions Report
- ☒ **City Council Study Session**

TECHNICAL REPORT

- ☒ Case Studies
- ☒ ODS Findings and Recommendations Outline
- ☒ Decision-Maker Study Session

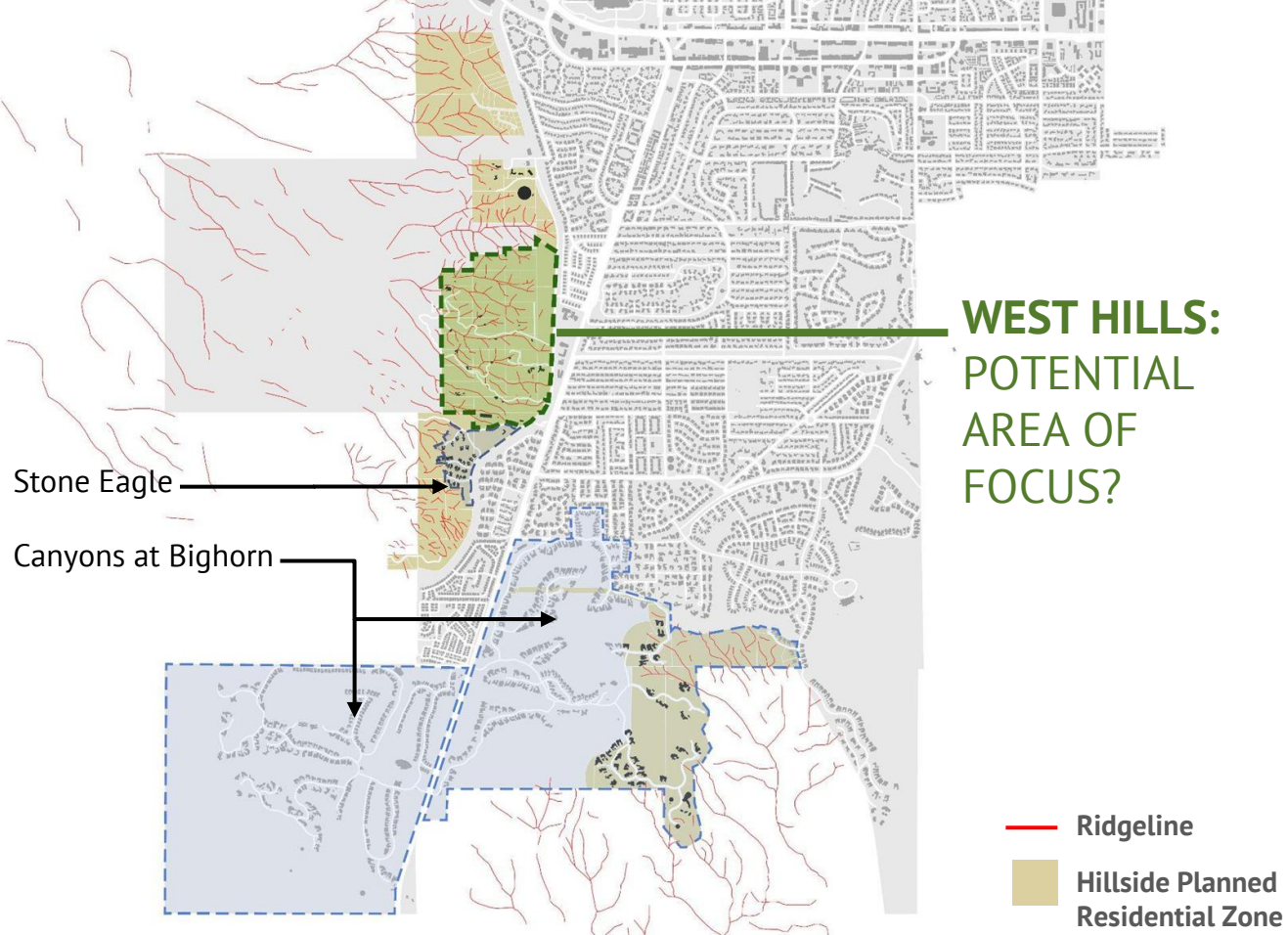
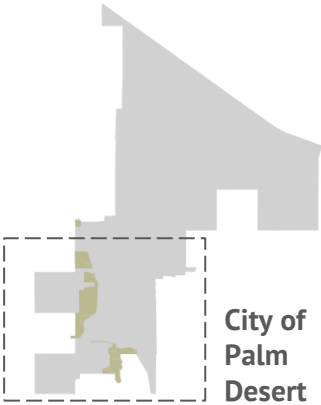
OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

- ☒ Administrative Draft ODS
- ☒ Public Review Draft ODS
- ☒ Public Hearing Draft ODS

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- ☒ Public Hearings
- ☒ Final ODS

HILLSIDE PLANNED RESIDENTIAL

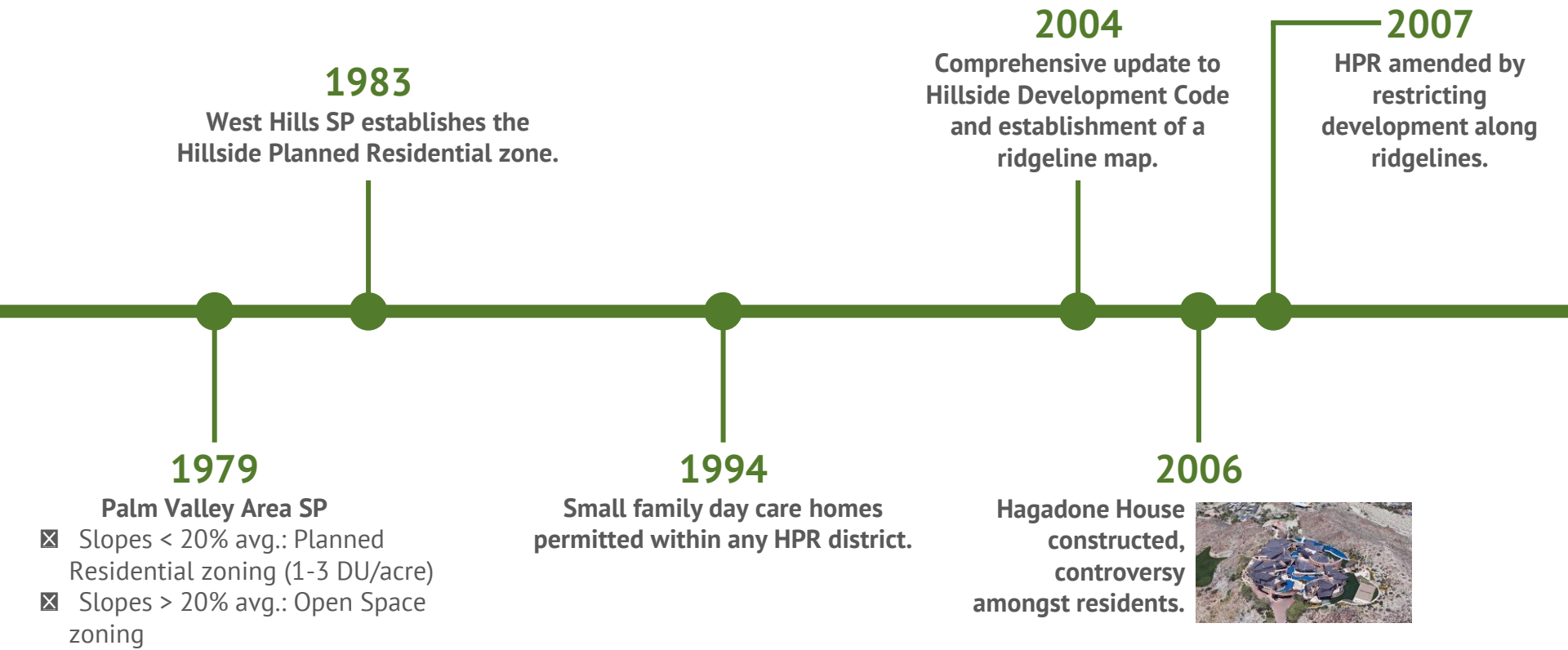


EXISTING REGULATIONS

- ♦ History of Hillside Zoning
- ♦ Palm Desert General Plan
- ♦ Hillside Planned Residential (HPR) Development Standards



HISTORY OF PALM DESERT HILLSIZE ZONING



GENERAL PLAN

| | |
|---|---|
| Land Use 1.2 Open space preservation. | Balance the development of the city with the provision of open space, and especially the hillsides surrounding the City, so as to create both high quality urban areas and high quality open space. |
| Land Use 1.5 Hillside Development. | Limit development and grading in areas with slopes greater than 20 percent and limit the density and intensity of development in areas with slopes of between 10 and 19 percent. |
| Environmental Resources 2.3 Hillside grading. | Continue to require the preparation of a grading analysis on hillside development to pre-determine where development should occur so as to minimize the impact of new development on views of the city's hillsides. |
| Environmental Resources 2.4 Public facilities. | Plan public facilities, roads, and private development to take advantage of the city's mountain and hillside views , especially as the City Center develops. |
| Environmental Resources 2.5 Dark sky. | Limit light pollution from outdoor sources, especially in rural, hillside and mountain areas, and open spaces, to maintain darkness for night sky viewing. |

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

| | | ODS | Design Guideline |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Density | min. 1 DU; max. 1 DU per 5 acres | <div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> | |
| Grading | Preserve natural contours of the land to avoid extensive cut and fill slopes to reduce the need for a staircase effect within developments. | | <div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> |
| | Architecture/landscape design which blends with the natural terrain to the greatest practical extent. | | <div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> |
| | Retention and protection of undisturbed viewsheds, natural landmarks, and features including vistas and the natural skyline as integral areas. | | <div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> |
| Building Pad Area | Area that is permanently disturbed by grading: max. 10,000 SF. | <div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> | |
| Access Road/ Driveway | Permanent grading disturbance of natural terrain for development of access to the approved building pad: max. 3,000 SF. | <div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> | |
| | Roads shall be located/designed to blend with the natural terrain to the greatest practical extent, consistent with other grading provisions. | | <div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> |
| Renaturalization | All cuts, fills, or other areas temporarily disturbed by grading shall be renaturalized, colored, and landscaped to blend with the adjacent undisturbed natural terrain to the satisfaction of the City Council. | | <div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> |
| DU Size | max. 4,000 SF per lot, inclusive of total SF of DU, garage, and accessory building size | <div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> | |

Not required if:

- Commission and Council approve a precise plan of design.
- If a property owner can demonstrate that a previous building pad was approved by the City or County before incorporation, no public hearing is required. Building size would be limited to 35% of the lot, max. 50% with ARC approval. Enlarging a previously approved existing building pad would require a new public hearing.

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (CONT.)

| | |
|---|--|
| Coverage | Max. 35% for previously approved existing building pads, max. 50% with ARC approval |
| Ridges | Development on or across ridges is prohibited. |
| Building Pads/ Architecture Design | Designed to eliminate or minimize any visual impact on the City to the maximum extent feasible. |
| Common Open Space (COS) - select one | <p>a. Dedication of COS to the City, which is subject to formal acceptance.</p> <p>b. Establishment of an association or nonprofit corporation of all property owners or corporations within the project area to ensure perpetual maintenance of all COS.</p> <p>c. Retention of ownership, control, and maintenance of all COS by the developer; all privately owned COS shall continue as such and shall only be used in accordance with the development plan; appropriate land use restrictions shall be contained in all deeds to ensure that the COS is permanently preserved according to the development plan; said deed restrictions shall run with the land, be for the benefit of present as well as future property owners, shall contain a prohibition against partition of COS.</p> |
| Design Criteria | <p>The overall plan shall achieve an integrated land and building relationship.</p> <p>Open spaces, pedestrian and vehicular circulation facilities, parking facilities, and other pertinent amenities shall be an integral part of the landscape and particular attention shall be given to the retention of natural landscape features of the site.</p> <p>The layout of structures and other facilities shall affect a conservation in street and utility improvements.</p> <p>Recreational areas, active and passive, shall be generally dispersed throughout the development and shall be easily accessible from all dwelling units.</p> <p>Architectural unity and harmony within the development and with the surrounding properties shall be attained.</p> |

| ODS | Design Guideline |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
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SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

EXISTING MUNICIPAL CODE:

- ❌ Vague descriptions and design guidelines which are **subjective and open to interpretation** by Staff and decision-makers
- ❌ There are **exceptions available to any standard**
- ❌ **Limited objective standards**
- ❌ There is **no clear definition of viewsheds** or **relationship between developments and viewsheds**
- ❌ There are **no grading design standards**

HILLSIDE PRECEDENTS

- ♦ Blaine County, Idaho
- ♦ Los Angeles Hillside Ordinance and Mulholland Drive Specific Plan
- ♦ Palm Springs, California
- ♦ Pitkin County, Colorado
- ♦ Salt Lake County, Utah
- ♦ Santa Barbara, California



Add a slide summarizing the key issues with the existing code:

- Vague descriptions and design guidelines which are subjective and open to interpretation by staff and decision makers
- Exceptions available to any standard
- Limited objective standards
- No clear definition of view sheds or relation between development and view shed
- No grading design standards

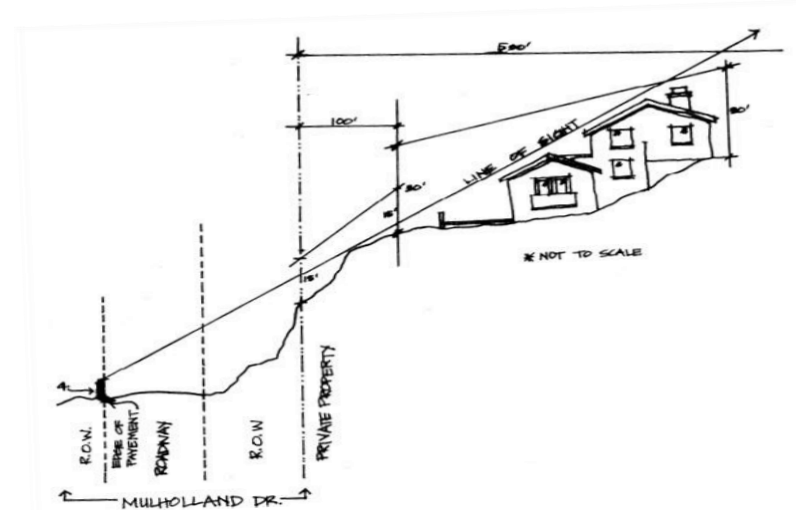
Use these issue identifications to prime council to understand why we looked at precedents of these other cities to show there are ways to address the issues we raise in this presentation

BLAINE COUNTY, IDAHO:

- ❑ On lots located adjacent to public lands, all buildings and other structures (except for perimeter fencing): **a min. 30' setback from federally managed and state endowment lands**
- ❑ Buildings and structures on lots of **five or more acres** shall have a **minimum 50' setback from public lands**
- ❑ Protection of skylines, ridges, knolls, tree and shrub clusters, and rock outcroppings to **preserve hillside appearance**

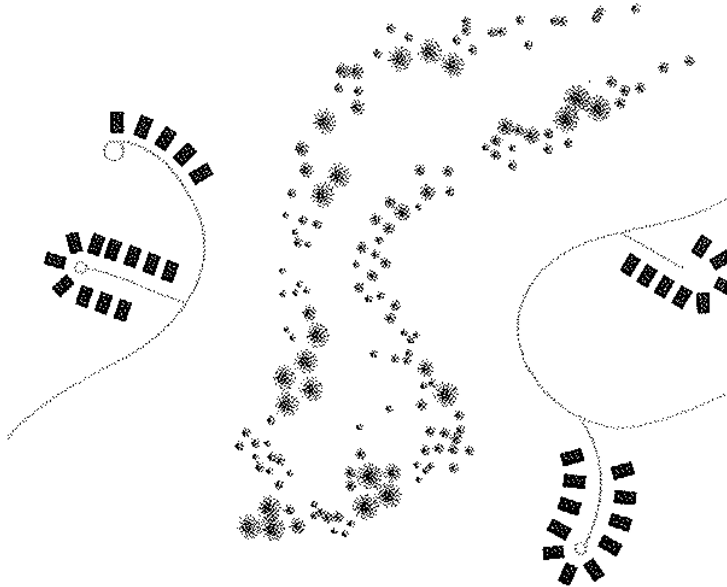
LOS ANGELES HILLSIDE ORDINANCE AND MULHOLLAND DRIVE SPECIFIC PLAN:

- ❑ **Visibility studies and/or viewshed analyses** depicting the relationship between a hillside building pad and a lower elevation corridor



SALT LAKE COUNTY, UTAH:

- ☒ **25% density bonus incentive** over the base density for **cluster developments** - which reduce infrastructure costs and environmental impacts



PITKIN COUNTY, COLORADO:

- ☒ Development standards **categorized by slope percentage** of parcel
- ☒ Detailed standards and guidelines for **retaining walls**, including maximum height, a max. two tiers of terracing, and material/color
- ☒ Heavy on infrastructural standards, such as **detention/stormwater, drainage, irrigation, utilities**

PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA:

- ☒ **Minor hillside streets** (serving 4 lots or less) require a **minimum 32' curb to curb width** and a minimum 40' right-of-way
- ☒ **Hillside collector streets** (serving more than 4 lots) require a **minimum 36' curb to curb width** and a minimum 40' right-of-way
- ☒ **Curb-to-curb width exceptions** include but are not limited to:
 - A min. 24' foot travel way is provided, adequate vertical and horizontal sight distance is provided
 - Roadways provide **adequate access for emergency equipment** and that the fire department may require **upgraded fire protection systems** both on and offsite

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA:

- ☒ **Height Maximums:** In rural areas: the height of any structure should not exceed 16' wherever there is a 16' drop in elevation within 100' of the proposed structure's location
- ☒ **Montecito Hillside Overlay Zone:** project grading shall not exceed 1,500 cubic yards of cut or fill (excavation not apparent from the exterior not included), unless additional grading is necessary to allow reasonable development of the property or to achieve reasonable vehicular access

CONSULTANT FINDINGS & CONSIDERATIONS

- ♦ Views To Hillsides
- ♦ Views From Hillsides
- ♦ Use of Native Landscape
- ♦ Cluster Development
- ♦ Site Access Standards



VIEWS TO HILLSIDES:

Views of the hillsides and mountains from the City are iconic, but due to ongoing single-family development, hillsides are increasingly subject to change in a manner that decreases the conservation of the hillside setting.



CONSIDERATION:

Develop more robust viewshed standards to the hillsides from roadways and streets and across the field of view of larger developments.

< *Calle de los Campesinos looking west, uphill*

VIEWS FROM HILLSIDES:

Views from the mountainsides and hills to the City are spectacular, but there are cases where these views are compromised by subsequent development in the hillsides.



CONSIDERATION:

Standards for **hillside building pads, pads in relationship to ridgelines, access roads and drives**, and the **screening and visibility of new construction** could further reduce the visibility of new homes and conserve viewsheds from and across the mountain sides. Additionally, **more robust standards for individual developments in the hillsides that address the fit and character of development** could be developed. Areas where standards could be further expanded include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Grading extent
- ◆ Height in relationship to ridgelines
- ◆ Roofline silhouette(s)
- ◆ Extent of scale, mass, bulk and transparency
- ◆ Use of color(s)
- ◆ Use of material(s)
- ◆ Extent of visible exterior lighting

< South Cliff Rd looking east, downhill

USE OF NATIVE LANDSCAPE:

The native desert landscape of the hillsides contributes significantly to the sense of place and identity of both the mountains and the city, but present landscape standards do not fully incorporate use of native and similar flora requirements.



CONSIDERATION:

Develop more robust standards for landscape in the hillside areas that conserves and fosters the native landscape characteristic of these locations.

< *Canyons at Bighorn*

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CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT:

Planned single-family residential developments emphasize individual lot development as opposed to cluster development that maintains more conserved open space.



CONSIDERATION:

Develop incentives for clustering of development in hillside areas that conserves more open space.

< *Canyons at Bighorn*

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SITE ACCESS STANDARDS:

Existing roads in some of the hillside areas do not meet minimum access standards that ensure life safety access. In some hillside areas, evidence of erosion due to water flow is visible and utilities are exposed.



CONSIDERATION:

Develop more base standards and requirements for individual property development in relationship to access, fire safety, flooding, and utilities that ensure life safety for both residents and first responders.

< South Cliff Road

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PALM DESERT
HILLSIDE OBJECTIVE
DESIGN STANDARDS

JK A

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS FOR CITY COUNCIL

- ♦ Should we concentrate our efforts in the West Hills area?
- ♦ Should we develop design standards for architectural and landscape fit in the landscape?
- ♦ Are there particular viewsheds that are important?
- ♦ Should we look further into hazard issues and opportunities for cluster development?
- ♦ Are there issues we haven't brought up that we should consider in this exercise?

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: March 27, 2025

PREPARED BY: Thomas Soule, Public Affairs Manager
Erica Powell, Management Analyst – Public Art

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE CITY SEAL REDESIGN PROCESS

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file an update on the City Seal redesign process.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

In response to a City Council request to explore updating the City Seal, staff is proposing a comprehensive redesign process. This study session will provide an overview of the proposed process for developing a new City Seal, including key phases for design, public engagement, and City Council approval.

The City Seal has remained unchanged since the City's incorporation 50 years ago, and as the City has evolved, so too has its identity and community character. A more contemporary and representative seal can help reinforce civic pride, reflect the City's progress, and ensure that official branding aligns with the City's current vision. This session serves as a critical next step in defining that approach, securing input, and ensuring a transparent and inclusive process before moving forward. This session will also provide an opportunity for Council members to share their insights before the process formally begins.

Proposed Process:

In broad strokes, the recommended approach includes the following steps:

- Create a Steering Committee – Staff will identify and select members for a working group comprising an artist, an art influencer, and a marketing professional.
- Design Development – Establishing guiding principles for the new seal's design, informed by historical context and community identity.
- Public Engagement – Gathering input from residents and stakeholders through surveys, meetings, and outreach efforts to ensure broad representation.
- Council Review & Approval – Presenting design options for City Council consideration and final selection.

Staff will incorporate City Council feedback from this session into the final process framework and create a detailed timeline for implementation. In addition, staff requests the appointment of an ad hoc City Council Subcommittee to provide staff with guidance throughout the process. A companion report is listed on the regular meeting agenda to confirm this appointment.

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

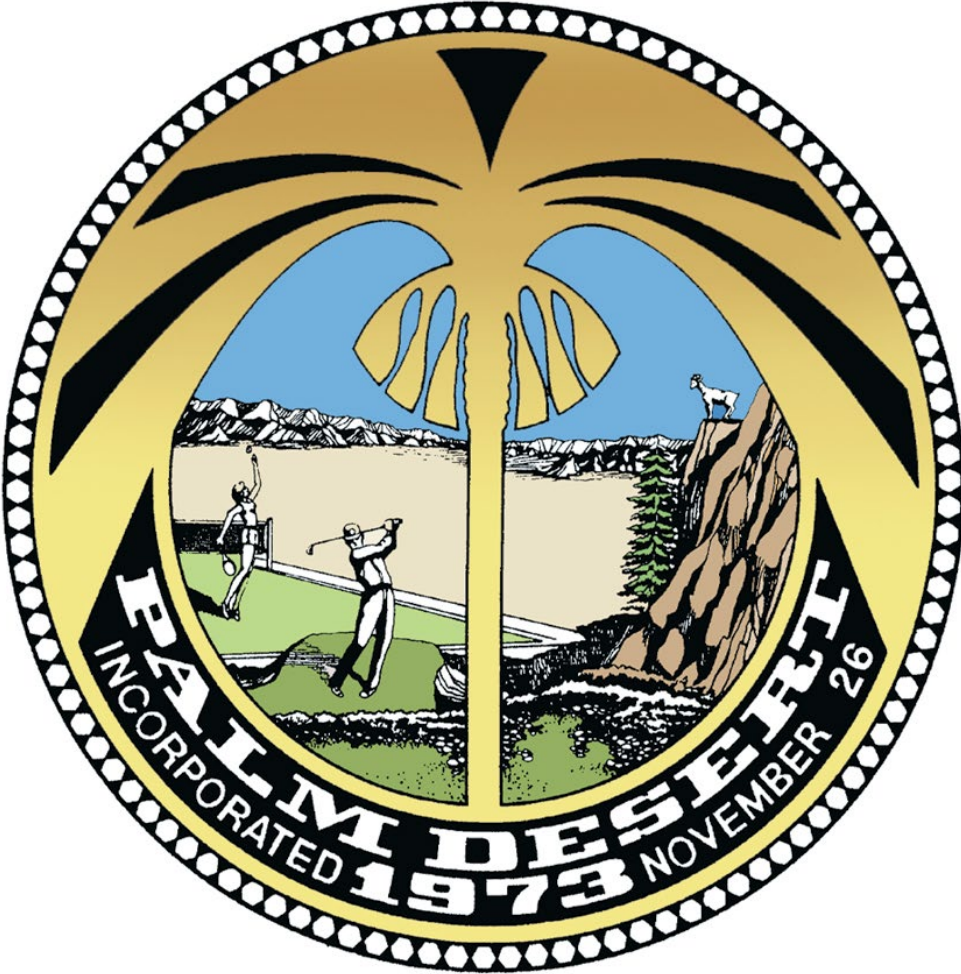
FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Total costs of this project are estimated at \$10,000. Funds are available in the appropriate FY 2024-25 Annual Budget accounts. There is no additional impact to the General Fund.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. City of Palm Desert Seal
2. City of Palm Desert Seal Re-design Process

City of Palm Desert Seal



City of Palm Desert Seal Re-design Process

1. Goals:

- Involve Key Stakeholders: Ensure vested groups are involved with the process.
- Community Engagement: Solicit input and participation from residents, merchants, and local organizations.
- Updating and ensuring quality to withstand the legacy for the next 50 years.

2. Deliverables

- City of Palm Desert Seal: new design.
- Timeline:
 - Study Session
 - Planning
 - Commission
 - Selection
 - Review
 - Public Engagement
 - Approval
 - Installation

3. Steering Committee

- Key Stakeholders:
 - Palm Desert City Council subcommittee: 2 members
 - Artist
 - Art Influencer
 - Marketing Professional
- Scheduled meetings: Call for Commission and selection process.

4. Establish Guidelines and Requirements

- Selection Process: Develop criteria prioritizing artistic vision, experience, and relevance to project goals.
- Staff to create rubric.
- Submission Requirements: Define deliverables, such as concept sketches or digital designs.
- Contract: Outline clear expectations, including scope of work, timelines, and payment structure.

5. Call for Commission

- Staff will draft the Call for Commission and incorporate input from stakeholder discussions.
- Selection process to begin with key stakeholders, then final round to be ranked by the public engagement and presented to the City Council for final approval.

6. Engage with the Community Through EngagePalmDesert

- **Project Website (EngagePalmDesert.com):** Maintain a hub for feedback portal.
- **Social Media:** Point the public to EngagePD to solicit input.
- **Community Partners:** Collaborate with schools, nonprofits, and cultural organizations (e.g., Artists Center) to extend engagement efforts.
- **Analytics:** Track community engagement metrics online, such as website visits, survey completions, or social media interactions.