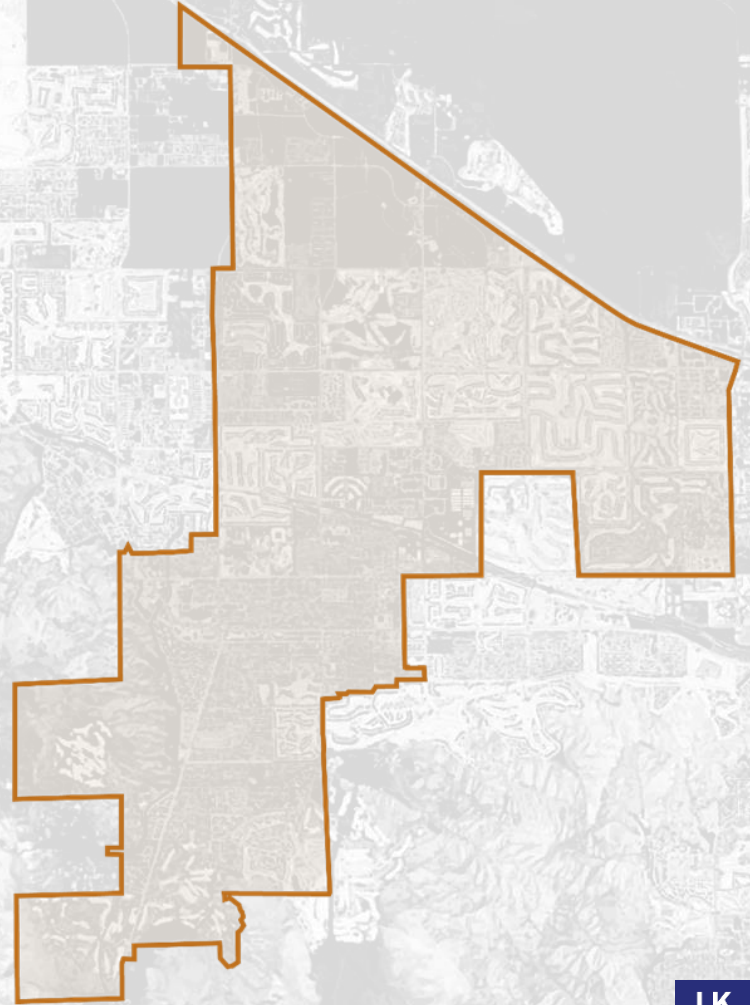




PALM DESERT

**Multifamily and Mixed-
Use Objective Design
Standards**

City Council
March 14, 2024



Introductions

City Staff

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Consultant

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Why Have Objective Design Standards?

- The State of California requires Cities to establish **Objective Standards for Qualifying Residential Development (e.g. Multifamily, Affordable Housing)**
 - SB 330 - Housing Crisis Act of 2019
 - Prohibits imposing or enforcing nonobjective design standards
 - Promotes more timely reviews and facilitates the project application approval process
 - Only deny approval if a project does not comply with these objective standards
 - SB 35 – Requires Cities to establish objective design standards
 - Limits City’s review of certain qualifying residential projects to ministerial review (staff approval – no discretion).
 - If the project complies with all objective standards, it **must** be approved
- If the City does not adopt Objective Design Standards, it can be compelled by the state to approve housing development that is inconsistent and incompatible with Palm Desert.

Overview

- Consideration:
 - City-initiated Zoning Ordinance Amendment to adopt Residential Objective Design Standards
 - Amendment to Title 25 of the Palm Desert Municipal Code to add Chapter 25.42 – Multifamily and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards
 - Also amend existing Chapters 25.10, 25.16, 25.60, 25.68, 25.72, and 25.99 to implement standards - Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA)24-0001
 - Adoption of the Multifamily and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards document
 - California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) finding that the project is exempt under Public Resources Code Section 21065, CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(2), 15378, and/or 15061(b)(3).
- Planning Commission – Recommended approval on February 6, 2024 (Resolution No. 2852)
- City Council – Final Decision

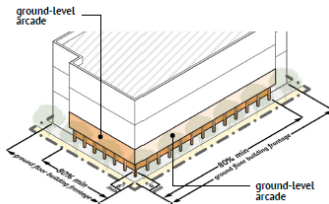
What Are Objective Design Standards?

Standards used by an agency to regulate new development in a community. No personal or subjective judgment by a public official and uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion.

- Examples include: Height, setbacks, lot coverage, percentage of open space, density, Floor Area Ratio (etc.)
 - Example Non-Objective Guideline: “Building Façade should provide architectural interest.”
 - Example Objective Design Standard:

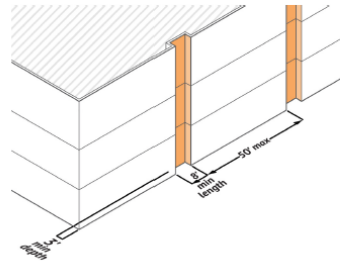
Building modulation. Buildings shall be broken into major and minor masses and/or feature architectural modulation utilizing at least two of the following.

- a. Minimum six-foot-clear width ground-level arcades, open-to-the-air galleries, colonnades, porches, recesses, ramadas, and trellis structures placed along a minimum of 80 percent of the ground-floor length of two building faces.



◀ If ODS 4.3.1(a) is incorporated into a project to meet modulation requirements, a ground-level arcade along 80 percent of two sides of a multifamily or mixed-use building as shown in the diagram is permitted.

- b. For each 50 feet of building wall length, incorporation of open-to-the-sky recesses in mass and bulk, or projections of mass and bulk, that are a minimum of eight feet in length and three feet in depth.



◀ This diagram shows open-to-the-sky recesses in the building mass that is at least three feet deep and eight feet long every 50 feet of building wall length. See ODS 4.3.1(b).

Background and Outreach

- 6/19/2023 – Community Open House - City Staff and the consultant held a community open house to gather input from interested residents and project applicants to invite feedback on the design review process and other important design-related issues based on recent housing developments since 2021.
 - Participating from Residents, Developers of Multi-family, Desert Valley Builders Association
- 6/20/2023 – Planning Commission Study Session #1
- 7/11/2023 – Architectural Review Commission Study Session #1
- 8/24/2023 – City Council Study Session
- 9/7/2023 - Joint Study Session ARC and Planning Commission
- 9/8/2023 – Community Open House #2 – An open house to present and discuss the draft ODS document with interested members of the public and stakeholders.
- 1/16/2024 – Scheduled for Hearing before Planning Commission. Cancelled due to lack of quorum.



Ordinance Information

- Applies to the following developments as identified by California Government Code Section 65556.5:
 - Multi-family housing developments.
 - Residential Mixed-Use Housing developments with a minimum of two-thirds of ($\frac{2}{3}$) the square footage designated for residential use.
 - Supportive and transitional housing development.
- Applicable zones:
 - Mixed Residential District (R-2).
 - Multifamily Residential District (R-3).
 - Planned Residential District (PR).
 - Office Professional (OP).
 - Planned Commercial (PC).
 - Specialty Commercial Center (PC-1).
 - District Commercial Center (PC-2).
 - Regional Commercial Center (PC-3).
 - Resort Commercial Center (PC-4)
- Does not apply to projects already submitted and deemed complete, filed SB 330 pre-application, or within Specific Plan with standards adopted.
- Does not apply to the Highway 111 Development Code Zones. Separate design standards are being created.

ODS SECTIONS

2 Project **Site** Objective Design Standards

3 **Landscape** and Open Space Objective Design Standards

4 Building **Architecture** Objective Design Standards

5 **Parking** Objective Design Standards



ODS DOCUMENT



City of Palm Desert CA, Draft December 2023

2.1 PROJECT FRONTAGE

2.1.1. **Maximum frontage length without break.** Public street frontages longer than 450 feet in length shall be separated by a public or private street, alley, or a minimum 50-foot wide and open-to-the-sky landscaped open space inclusive of pedestrian pathways.

Building breaks along the public-facing street frontage create opportunities for circulation and connectivity on larger sites. See ODS 2.1.1.

2.2 PROJECT ORIENTATION

2.2.1. **Project orientation.** Multifamily and mixed-use projects shall be oriented toward and overlook public streets. To determine that a multifamily or mixed-use project overlooks the public street, such projects shall incorporate a minimum of two of the following project orientation components.

- a. A landscaped setback that is a minimum of 20 feet deep as measured from the frontage property line, or greater as determined by the setback requirements in Title 25 of the Palm Desert Municipal Code. The landscaped setback shall be generally parallel to the project frontage and incorporate shade trees, planted a maximum of 30 feet on center, within the first 20 feet of depth along the public street frontage.
- b. At least one open space that is a minimum of 20 feet in depth as measured perpendicular to the public street, the size of which is in relation to the project's total public street frontage length, per the table below.

This multifamily project is oriented towards and incorporates an open space facing the public street. See ODS 2.2.1(b).

Street Frontage	Minimum Open Space
Less than or equal to 150 feet	600 square feet
Greater than 150 feet and less than 450 feet	1,500 square feet
Greater than or equal to 450 feet	20% of the total frontage length times 2.5 feet

10 Chapter 2: Project Site ODS

City of Palm Desert CA, Draft December 2023

- c. Fences, walls, and/or permanent planter boxes greater than 42 inches in height shall not exceed 20 percent of the total length of the public street frontage.
- d. At the ground level of buildings generally parallel to and located within ten feet of a public-street-facing frontage setback: street-facing and covered pedestrian entries, stoops, and/or a minimum eight-foot-clear width and depth porches, open-to-the-air galleries, recesses, ramadas, and/or open arcades along a minimum of 20 percent of the public street frontage.

2.3 PROJECT FENCES AND WALLS

2.3.1. **Fence and wall placement.** Fences and walls on public-street-facing lots shall meet the placement requirements correlated to the project's lot size, per the table below.

Project Lot Size	Fence and Wall Placement Requirements
Less than or equal to 15,000 square feet	No fence, wall, or pedestrian gate shall be placed within the required front yard setback.
Greater than 15,000 feet and less than one acre	No fence, wall, or gate shall be placed within the frontage setback along public streets. Fences, walls, and gates, placed to the rear of the frontage setback and greater than 42 inches in height, shall not exceed 60 percent of the total frontage length as measured along the setback line.
Greater than or equal to one acre	No fence, wall, or gate shall be placed within the frontage setback along public streets. Fences, walls, and gates, placed to the rear of the frontage setback and greater than 42 inches in height, shall not exceed 80 percent of the total frontage length as measured along the setback line.

Modulating a perimeter fence or wall provides versatility at eye level so that pedestrians are not walking alongside a flat wall. See ODS 2.3.1(c).

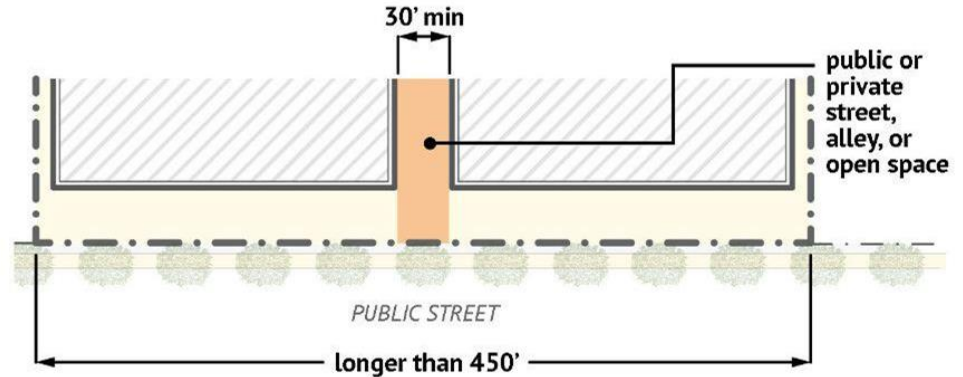
11 CITY OF PALM DESERT MULTIFAMILY AND MIXED-USE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

Project Site ODS

enhance the pedestrian
experience between
multifamily and mixed-use
developments and their
public-facing frontages

2.1.1. Maximum frontage length without a break.

Public-facing street frontages **longer than 450 feet** in length shall be separated by a public or private street, alley or a **minimum 30-foot wide and open-to-the-sky landscaped open space** inclusive of pedestrian pathways and parkways.



2.2.1. Project orientation.

a. A **landscaped setback** that is a **min. 20'** deep as measured from the **frontage property line**, is generally parallel to the project frontage, incorporates shade trees planted a max. 30' on center and within the first 20' of depth along the public street frontage.



2.2.1. Project orientation. (cont.)

b. At least **one open space** that is **a minimum of 20 feet** in depth as measured perpendicular to the public street, the size of which is in relation to the project's total street frontage length per the table below:

Street Frontage (feet)	Minimum Open Space (square feet)
≤ 150 feet	600 SF
$151 \geq 450$ feet	1,500 SF
> 450 feet	20% of the total frontage length times 25 feet

2.2.1. Project orientation.

c. **Fences, walls, and/or permanent planter boxes** greater than 42” in height **shall not exceed 20%** of the total length of the public street frontage.

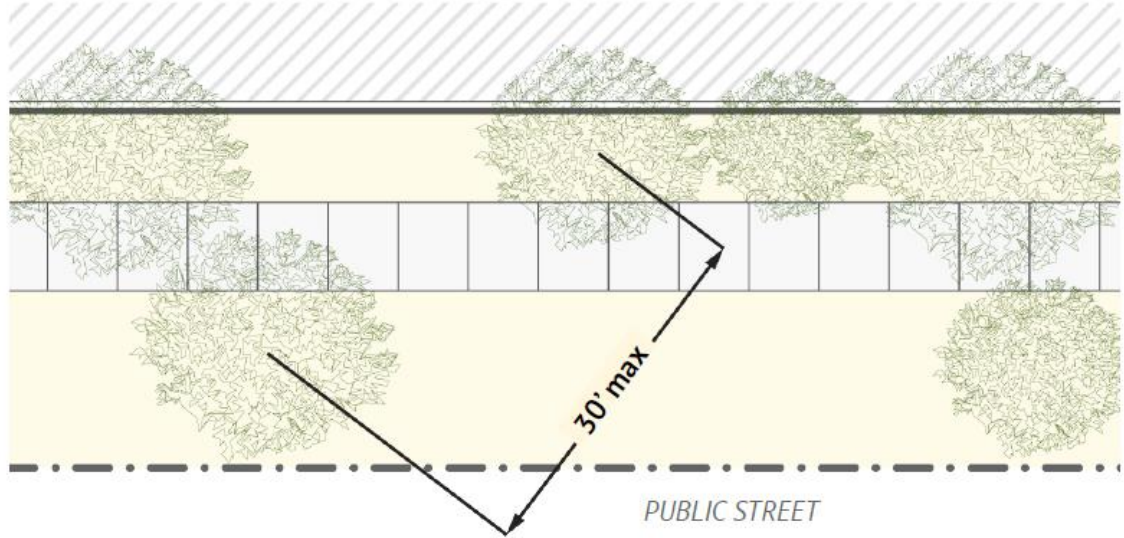
d. An **architectural component** at the ground level of buildings generally parallel to and **located within 10’ of a public-street-facing frontage setback** along a **min. 20% of the public street frontage**.

Landscape and Open Space ODS

cultivate over time
pedestrian-oriented open
spaces with a visual and
natural identity inspired by
the surrounding native
landscape

3.3.1. Canopy trees at public street-adjointing frontages.

A minimum of one irrigated, **24-inch box** tree shall be planted a **maximum of 30 feet on center** along frontages adjoining public streets.



3.3.5. Canopy tree selection.

Along frontages adjoining public streets and public rights-of-way and yards where canopy trees are required, utilize a **minimum of three species** from the following list and /or approved list of drought resistant canopy trees with no more than 50 percent of all selected canopy trees comprising the same species.

1. 'Desert Museum' Palo Verde. *Parkinsonia (Cercidium) x 'Desert Museum.'*
2. Ironwood. *Olneya tesota.*
3. Palo Brea. *Parkinsonia praecox.*
4. Sweet Acacia. *Acacia smallii.*
5. Texas Ebony. *Pithecellobium flexicaule.*
6. Thornless Cascalote. *Caesalpinia cacalaco 'Smoothie.'*



3.9.4. Types of active amenities.

Active amenities shall be from the list below. **A water amenity must be one of the required number of active amenities.** An active amenity may be used multiple times and each active amenity provided counts as one amenity.

1. **Active water amenity, including but not limited to a pool, spa, hot tub, splash pad, and/or misting area** (must be one of the required number of active amenities)
2. **Barbecue**
3. **Clubhouse and/or recreation room that opens onto an outdoor amenity area**
4. **Community garden**
5. **Court game facility**
6. **Exercise area and/or par course**
7. **Jogging and/or par course**
8. **Pet area and/or run and/or wash**
9. **Play area, children's**

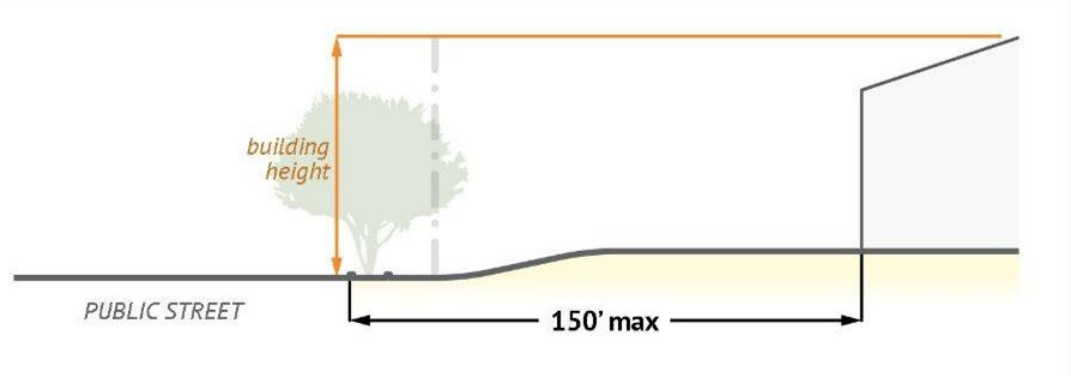


Building Architecture ODS

connect multifamily and mixed-use projects to existing natural and physical surrounds using building modulation, design components, and desert-appropriate materials and colors

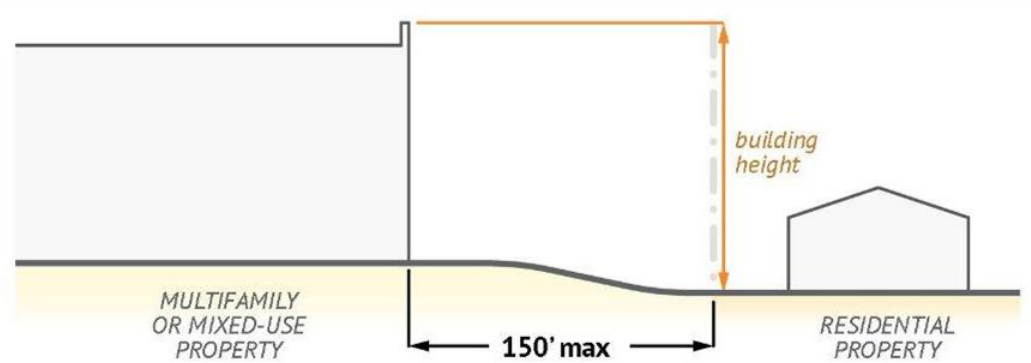
4.1.1. Building height measurement along public streets.

The maximum building height of a multifamily and mixed-use structure **within 150 feet of the curb of a public street** shall be established by a vertical **measurement from the average elevation of the street curb adjacent to the property to the highest point of the structure**, provided that a roof shall be measured to the highest point of the roof.



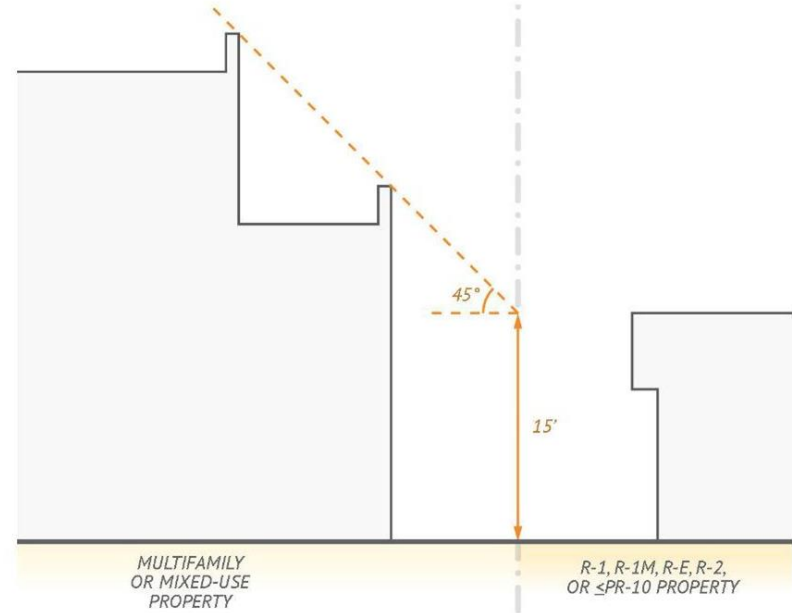
4.1.2. Building height measurement adjoining a residential zoned property.

The maximum building height of a multifamily and mixed use structure **within 150 feet** of a residential property line shall be established by a **vertical measurement from the elevation of the finished grade along the property line of the residential zoned property to the highest point of the structure**, provided that a roof shall be measured to the highest point of the roof of the structure.



4.1.3. Transitional height abutting a single-family zoned property.

When a multifamily or mixed-use building is placed on a lot that abuts or is across an alley or right-of-way from a R-1, R-1M, R-E, R-2, or PR regulation properties with a density of PR-10 or lower property line, the otherwise allowed building height shall be modulated by an **inward leaning 45-degree angled plane inclined towards the multifamily or mixed-use building at a 45-degree angle** as measured from a **horizontal plane originating 15 feet above grade at the abutting property line.**

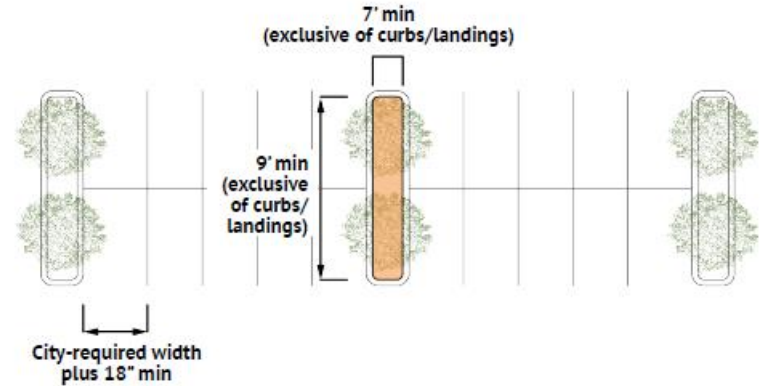


Parking ODS

create landscaping, shade,
and pedestrian circulation
at surface parking lots and
architectural continuity
between project buildings
and parking garages

5.1. Surface Parking Design

- 5.1.4. Landscape islands shall be **no less than nine feet in length and seven feet in width**, exclusive of curbs and landings.
- 5.1.7. For surface parking lots **with more than 30 parking spaces**, a **minimum 10 percent of the area** of a surface parking lot shall be **landscape islands**, achieved by either:
 - The **use of finger islands at endcaps** and a **landscape island every ten parking spaces**
 - A **minimum five-foot continuous landscape planter located within the center of parking rows**, running between endcap finger islands



5.1. Surface Parking Design (cont.)

- 5.1.8. **One canopy tree** is required for **every three uncovered parking spaces.**
- 5.1.8. **One canopy tree** is required for **every eight covered parking spaces.**
- 5.1.9. Canopy trees at surface parking lots shall be **uniformly distributed** across the surface area of the lot so that **no parking space is more than 30 feet from the center of a canopy tree.**

ODS COMPLIANCE CHECKLISTS



CITY OF PALM DESERT

Multifamily Compliance Checklist



The Objective Design Standards (ODS) assist project applicants and designers to achieve multifamily design objectives. As a project is designed, applicants and designers must utilize the ODS outlined in Chapters 2-5 of the City of Palm Desert Multifamily and Mixed Use Objective Design Standards, as well as the Multifamily Compliance Checklist, to determine compliance in advance of submittal and formal review for compliance by the City.

Applicants must fill out the sections of the following pages and check "compliance" or "not applicable (N/A)" as appropriate. In cases where an explanation is required, describe how the multifamily project complies with the ODS or how the ODS is not applicable to the project. If the applicant requires additional space for any explanation and/or chooses to illustrate compliance to an ODS, attachments may be submitted along with this form. Once the form is completed, it must be submitted to the City along with the application submittal package. The City will fill out the sections designated "City use only" in their review upon the applicant's submission of this checklist and other application materials.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Proposed Project Name:

Date:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicant Name:

Please check one. Property Owner Representative
 Design Firm/Architect Engineer
 Other (please specify):

Email:

Phone:

CITY USE ONLY	
Reviewed by: <input type="text"/>	City Comments (Optional): <input type="text"/>
Date: <input type="text"/>	
OVERALL COMPLIANCE FINDING	
YES: <input type="checkbox"/> NO: <input type="checkbox"/>	



MULTIFAMILY BUILDING ARCHITECTURE DESIGN

New multifamily projects shall meet all of the below Building Architecture standards per Chapter 4 of the City of Palm Desert Multifamily and Mixed Use Objective Design Standards policy.

4.1. BUILDING HEIGHT				CITY USE ONLY		
ODS	DESCRIPTION	NOT APPLICABLE	COMPLIANT	4.1. BUILDING HEIGHT		
				NOT APPLICABLE	COMPLIANT	NOT COMPLIANT
4.1.1.	Building height measurement along public streets. Max. building height within 150' of the curb of a public street is established by a vertical measurement from the average elevation of the street curb adjacent to the property to the highest point of the structure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.2.	Building height measurement adjoining a residential zoned property. Max. building height within 50' of a residential zoned property line is established by a vertical measurement from the elevation of the finished grade along the property line of the residential zoned property or the finished grade along the property line of the project site, whichever is lower in elevation, to the highest point of the roof of the structure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.3.	Transitional height abutting a single-family zoned property. If building abuts or is across a right-of-way from a single-family zoned property, the allowed building height is modulated by an inward-leaning 45° angled plane inclined towards the building as measured from a horizontal plane originating 15' above grade at the abutting property line.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.4.	Maximum building height at public-street-facing frontages. Select the appropriate requirement per options below. <input type="checkbox"/> a. Building distance from street-facing setback is ≤ 30 ft: max. building height is 24' and 2-stories with flat roof <input type="checkbox"/> b. Building distance from street-facing setback is > 30 ft: max. building height per Municipal Code		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><i>If "Not Applicable" was selected in the above section, provide an explanation for why the ODS does not apply to the proposed project (required). This comment box may also be used for further explanations of compliance (optional).</i></p> <input type="text"/>				<p>City comments (optional). <input type="text"/></p>		

Future Considerations

Amendments to the Municipal Code to ensure existing non-objective standards are updated to be objective:

Title 25 – Objective Development Standards

Title 26 – Objective Subdivision Standards

Title 27 – Objective Grading Standards

Streamline development review by removing or reducing discretion

Ensure the City is positioned to enforce local standards as the State reduces local discretion over housing development

Recommendation

Introduce for first reading an Ordinance entitled:

“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING THE PALM DESERT MUNICIPAL CODE TO ADD CHAPTER 25.42 – MULTIFAMILY AND MIXED-USE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS AND AMENDING OTHER CHAPTERS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE.”