



# TOWN OF FAIRFAX

## STAFF REPORT

### May 6, 2020

**TO:** Mayor and Town Council  
**FROM:** Ben Berto, Director of Planning and Building Services  
**SUBJECT:** Receive Status Update regarding Objective Design and Development Standards

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive report.

#### **BACKGROUND**

State laws have changed to mandate that the primary and in some cases only way that jurisdictions can review housing development projects is via locally adopted Objective Design and Development Standards (ODDS). County jurisdictions recognized the challenge to heretofore methods of project review, and ten of them including Fairfax have pooled resources to develop ODDS. Fairfax's share of this effort is being funded by a State planning grant.

The Planning Commission discussed local efforts at their February 20 and April 16 meetings.

State law mandates that developers of multi-unit housing applications be reviewed with a ministerial (building permit-only) process. This process means that those developments will only be evaluated by ODDS that have been adopted at the time of application submittal.

Opticos is heading up a team developing ODDS for the County and nine Marin jurisdictions including Fairfax. This effort is entering an active public phase. With the coronavirus, public workshops that had been scheduled in May are having to be converted to an online/virtual meeting format.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Efforts to develop ODDS in Fairfax will involve the Planning Commission, the Town Council, and Fairfax townspeople. A very brief summary of how the ODDS process will occur follows:

A design team under the lead firm Opticos will develop a draft "*toolkit*" of objective standards that are free from subjective interpretation. The toolkit standards will be based on different *place types* in Marin generally, and include a Fairfax-focused annex that will reflect local conditions. Place types are based on residential building types and site conditions.

The community engagement plan for Fairfax includes plans for a community workshop in the latter part of May to get community leaders and residents input on ODDS-related issues, preferences, and concerns. A video and countywide survey is also being conducted at this time to solicit the public's visual preferences and inform development of standards. Staff encourages all persons who are interested in helping to shape the character of future development in Fairfax to click or paste the following link to provide their input:  
<https://www.marincounty.org/depts/cd/divisions/planning/long-range-planning-initiatives/objective-design-and-development-standards>

A community-led survey of potential historic resources and recommendations for cultural resources protection will run in tandem with the Opticos-led work. At their April 16 meeting, the Planning Commission designated Phil Green and Norma Fragoso to serve on an ad hoc committee that will assist in selecting a historic consultant to begin the work.

Draft ODDS recommendations are preliminarily scheduled to be presented to the Planning Commission at the end of 2020, and then to the Town Council in early 2021.

Staff is working with the Opticos team to structure a virtual community workshop on the evening of Wednesday, May 27. We anticipate that Town Councilmembers and Planning Commissioners may want to participate in the workshop, which will require that we post the workshop as special meetings of the Town Council and Planning Commission.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None at this time