

## September 27 Council Meeting -- Objective Standards Agenda Item

September 25, 2001

Dear Mayor DuBois and Council Members,

We, the co-chairs of PAN, are concerned that the new Objective Standards will do away with rules that for decades have prevented larger new buildings from overwhelming nearby residences.

We understand that the State is requiring Objective Standards for *some* new residential and mixed-use proposals. That being the case, why does the proposal do away with Objective Standards for commercial buildings? Whether that is the intent or not, such an oversight must be corrected.

To reiterate, the State is not requiring us to revise our standards for all new buildings. The staff report cites just two such projects in the city that have requested exemptions from the current Context-Based Criteria as allowed by state law but does not say if they are even eligible. Without specific examples, data and justification, does it make sense to change how we govern all other buildings, such as offices, especially if we will end up with weaker standards for those?

Plus, the staff proposes rezoning more parcels for the HIP. Instead the Council should insist that changes to zoning makes 100% affordable housing projects the most valuable use of land. This will incentivize more below-market rate housing, which is what we need.

Additionally, the staff report fails to detail any impacts whatsoever, let alone the huge potential fallout from removing our current standards. Some key problems with proposed changes as outlined in the staff report:

- Little public input; however input was sought from developers, consultants, and architects.
- Absence of analysis of any impacts.
- No outreach to residents affected by the code change, as has become far too frequent.
- No comparison of new rules with the old rules.

The proposed ordinance removes privacy protections for residents near new development and deletes long-standing context-based protection rules. It even favors unzoning for commercial development (which we don't need), making affordable housing (which we do need) harder to build. What other changes might be buried in the new code that we have yet to discover? A line-by-line comparison of the new code and old code must be done so we can identify what is gained and what is lost to the community.

Please send these new standards back to staff and

- Insist on a detailed 1-1 comparison
- Insist that residential privacy be fully protected in the new standards
- Retain old context-based rules wherever the state allows (i.e., on most buildings)
- Don't expand HIP – instead prioritize 100% affordable housing
- Expand protection to RM-40 and all other residential uses
- Remove ambiguous and unenforceable language from objective standards

Thank you.

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