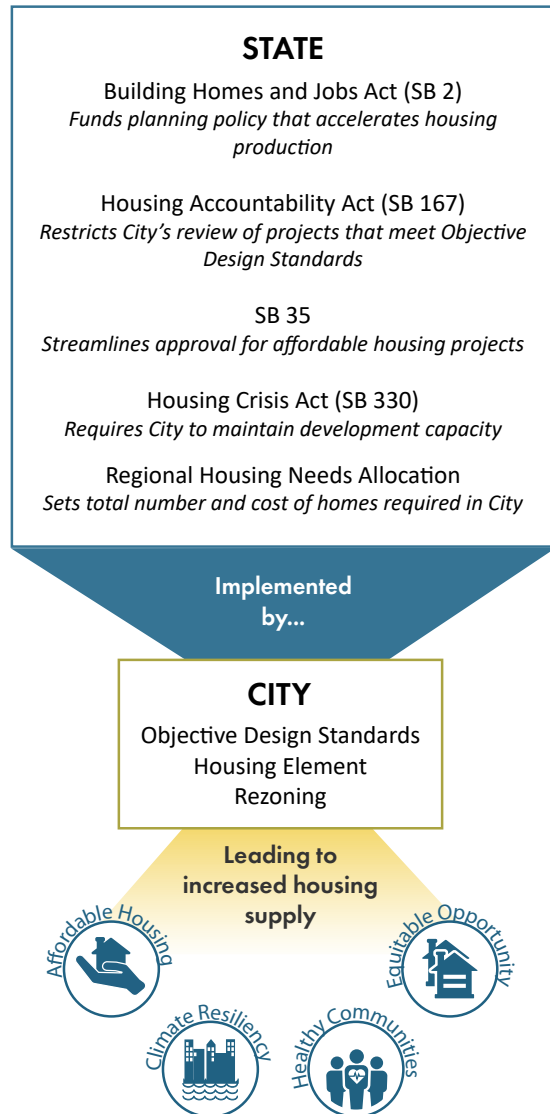


Terms & Abbreviations

Santa Cruz Objective Multi-Family Standards



The City of Santa Cruz is creating objective development standards for multi-family housing. These standards will influence the look and feel of future housing development in Santa Cruz and we want the standards to reflect community priorities and values. Because city planning uses a lot of jargon, we created this guide to serve as your cheat sheet throughout the process. We hope this information equips you to provide well-informed feedback.



SB 2, Building Homes and Jobs Act

California grant source from HCD (State Housing and Community Development Department) that is funding this project. The grant funds planning processes that will accelerate the production of housing. Creating objective development standards is one of the priority policy areas from this grant.

Housing Accountability Act (HAA)

Restricts the ability of a local jurisdiction to deny, reduce the density of, or make infeasible housing projects that are consistent with objective development standards. The HAA was first passed in 1982 and has been significantly amended in 2017, 2018, and 2019 in response to California's housing crisis.

SB 35

Legislation from 2017 that streamlines the approval processes for certain Multi-Family housing projects when jurisdiction is not producing enough housing to meet the need under RHNA. SB 35 allows housing projects in Santa Cruz with 50% of units affordable to low-income households to qualify for a ministerial review process.

SB 330, Housing Crisis Act of 2019

Prohibits jurisdictions from taking certain actions, including imposing subjective design review standards, and requires jurisdictions to maintain the development capacity planned within their limits as of January 1, 2018. This means any reduction in the number of homes or apartments that can be built on one property must be accompanied by an increase in the number that can be built elsewhere so there is no net loss of potential homes.

An "objective development standard" does not require personal or subjective judgment by a public official. It contains requirements that can be applied uniformly across projects. The project designer, the public, and decision-makers can see these requirements at any time.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

Pronounced “reeh-na”. Number of new homes that each jurisdiction is assigned to build by the State to meet California’s housing needs at all income levels. The RHNA for the Santa Cruz region is allocated across each jurisdiction by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) based on factors like housing demand, employment, and public facilities. For the last RHNA cycle (2015-2023), the City of Santa Cruz was assigned 747 housing units, and the number is expected to roughly double for the next cycle.

Acre

Land area measurement equivalent to 43,560 sf (~ the size of a football field without the endzones), used as the basis for calculating allowed density.

Affordable Housing

Housing that costs less than 30 to 35% of a household’s monthly income. This term is used with different meanings in different contexts. When used by the City, this term means Deed-Restricted Affordable housing, defined below.

Keeping housing costs below 30% of income is intended to ensure that households have enough money to pay for other necessities. Households that spend more than 30% of income on housing costs are considered cost-burdened.

Deed Restriction

Limitation on how a property can be used. Deed restrictions are the tool most frequently used to ensure affordable housing remains affordable to owners and renters.

Deed-Restricted Affordable Housing

Unit may only be rented or purchased by households that qualify based on income (based on the percentage of the Area Median Income, or AMI, that a household makes). Rents and purchase prices are 30% or 35% of the monthly income of the top end of the categories below.

Santa Cruz Affordable Housing Income Limits for Two-Person Household

Extremely Low Income (ELI) (up to 30% of AMI)	\$31,800
Very Low Income (VLI) (up to 50% of AMI)	\$53,000
Low Income (up to 80% of AMI)	\$85,000
Median Income (up to 100% of AMI)	\$88,000
Moderate Income (up to 120% of AMI)	\$118,800

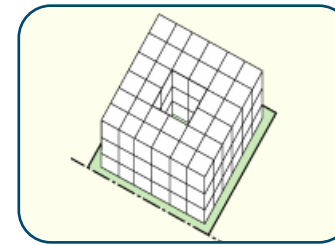
Density

How many individual dwelling units can be developed on a site based on a per acre ratio. Represented by dwelling unit/acres (du/ac).

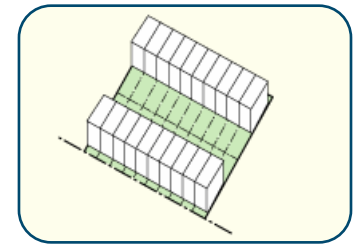
A 10,890 sf site equals 0.25 acres; at a density of 12 du/ac, 3 units would be allowed. ADUs don’t count toward allowed density.

In Santa Cruz, the following categories of density are defined in the 2030 General Plan and the zoning ordinance:

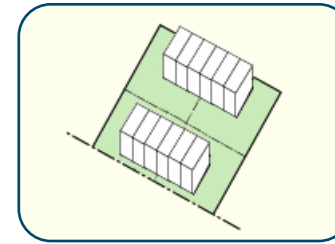
High Density
30.1 to 55 du/ac



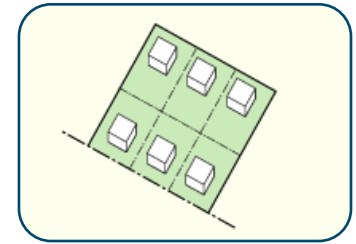
Medium Density
20.1-30 du/ac



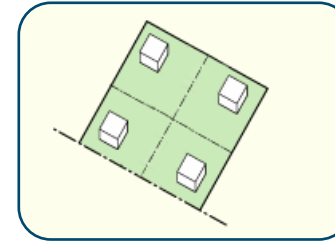
Low-Medium Density
10.1 to 20 du/ac



Low Density
1.1 to 10 du/ac



Very-Low Density
0.1 to 1 du/ac



Source:
City of San Pablo, 2018;
Google Earth, 2020.

Design Permit

Approval typically granted by planning department that approves the proposed design of a building based on established regulations and findings. The review process for typically involves City staff review followed by a public hearing. Such an approval allows the applicant to proceed to the next stage of the development process, typically building permit application.

Development Standard

Site or building design requirements that regulate the placement, bulk, scale, and look of buildings. California state law (SB 330 passed in 2019) prohibits cities from enforcing standards established after January 1, 2020 that are not objective on land where housing is allowed. See *Density*, *Floor Area*, and *Setbacks* for examples of development standards.

Discretionary Review

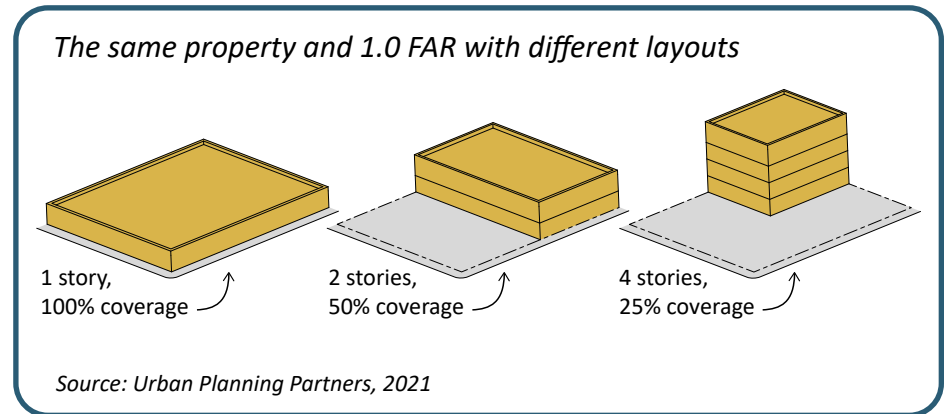
Development approval process that involves discretion, either by City staff or by a public hearing body such as the Planning Commission or City Council. These processes use both objective and subjective factors to review a proposed project and/or land use. Assessing a project's consistency with neighborhood character is an example of using a subjective design guideline in a discretionary review.

Entitlement Process

Steps to acquire various required approvals from City Government and any other relevant agencies to prior to the construction of new or remodeled buildings.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

The allowable bulk of a building based on the parcel size. It is calculated by taking the square footage of a building divided by the square footage of a parcel. For example, a 1.0 FAR limits a structure to one story covering 100 percent of the parcel or two stories covering 50 percent of the parcel.



General Plan

Documents a jurisdiction's long-term vision about how the community will grow in the next 20 years, reflecting community priorities and values. State law requires every jurisdiction to adopt a General Plan that sets goals and policies in several areas, including housing, land use, safety, conservation, and transportation. Santa Cruz. *General Plan 2030* is Santa Cruz's current General Plan.

The General Plan establishes a range of densities across Santa Cruz. The Mixed-Use High Density (MXHD) and Mixed-Use Visitor Commercial (MXVC) designations allow an FAR up to 2.75 and 55 du/ac. Areas with these designations are found along Ocean St, Water St, and Soquel Ave. The objective standards will have to consider development up to this intensity.

Ministerial Review

Development approval process involving little or no personal judgement by City staff or public officials. Project review is strictly focused on assessing compliance with zoning standards and other criteria such as building code requirements.

Multi-Family Housing

Multiple dwelling units on one site (generally attached units). Duplexes, apartments, and townhomes are examples of multi-family housing.

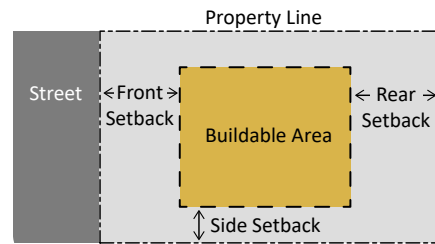
Ordinance

Local law adopted by the City Council. Also referred to as City Code.

Setback

Distance between a building and front, side, or rear property lines. A 10-foot rear setback means there are 10 feet between the building and the rear property line (i.e., where the backyard ends). Different zoning districts have different minimum setback requirements.

Example setbacks



Source: Urban Planning Partners, 2021

Zoning Ordinance

Standards and regulations that define what, where, how, and how much can be built or operated in the city. The Zoning Ordinance typically implements policies contained in the General Plan by regulating both land uses (such as commercial uses or residential uses) and development (such as buildings, structures, grading). Also called the Zoning Code or the Municipal Code.

Common Abbreviations

Planning is full of acronyms. Here are some of the most common ones you might come across:

AB	Assembly Bill
AMI	Area Median Income
ADU	Accessory Dwelling Unit
CC	City Council
DU/AC	Dwelling Units per Acre
ED	Economic Development Department
GP	General Plan
HCD	California State Housing and Community Development Department
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
PC	Planning Commission
PW	Public Works Department
RHNA	Regional Housing Needs Allocation
SB	Senate Bill
STR	Short Term Rental
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
ZA	Zoning Administrator