



**STAFF REPORT TO THE MARIN COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP**

Offsite Objective Design and Development Roadway Standards (ODDS)

**Recommendation:** Consider the proposed offsite objective design and development standards for roadways in the City-Centered and Baylands Corridors and revisions to Title 24 and provide feedback.

**Hearing Date:** July 27, 2026

Agenda item 4

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Signature:

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

On January 24, 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted the 2023-2031 Marin County Housing Element, Safety Element, and Environmental Impact Report, along with related Countywide Plan and Development Code amendments. The Housing Element includes 33 programs and policies, including a policy to promote development certainty by establishing a ministerial review process for affordable housing projects and development of five or more dwelling units on housing element sites (Program 2: By Right Approval). In response, the Board adopted a Form-Based Code (FBC) in January 2023 which provides objective design and development standards for onsite building design and site layout.

The Housing Element also includes Program 10 which calls for adoption of objective development standards for offsite infrastructure improvements which were not addressed in detail in the FBC.

Since the adoption of the Housing Element, the County has received an unprecedented number of housing development applications, most of which involve subdivision applications. All of these applications have been submitted pursuant to the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, adopted in Senate Bill 330 (SB 330), which added, among other statutes, Government Code section 65941.1. SB 330 allows an applicant for a housing development project to submit a preliminary application, and the zoning, design, subdivision, and fee requirements that will apply to the housing development project throughout the review and entitlement process are only (with certain exceptions) those that were in effect on the date that the applicant submits a complete preliminary application, including the payment of a permit processing fee. To date, the County has received nine such applications totaling 466 proposed units and anticipates receiving more in the coming months.

## DISCUSSION

### Need for Offsite Objective Design and Development Standards (ODDS)

Due to a record number of housing development applications in the unincorporated areas of the County, there will be a significant increase in demands on local infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and public services. These impacts will extend beyond the boundaries of individual projects and may necessitate physical upgrades to existing public systems to accommodate the new demands. Offsite improvements must be completed in accordance with the County's development standards and regulations.

Recent state legislation (e.g., California's SB 330, the Housing Accountability Act, Assembly Bill 2011, Senate Bill 35/423, etc.) requires counties to use only objective standards when reviewing qualifying multi-family and mixed-use housing projects. These laws aim to reduce the scope of discretionary standards that, in the past, allowed officials' or the public's subjective opinions to influence project design and streamline the project review process.

To comply with the state laws and after an extensive public process, the County adopted the FBC in January 2023 to create objective zoning standards for new housing developments. The FBC standards largely relate to onsite improvements and contain limited standards for street frontages.

Furthermore, due to a record number of housing development applications in the unincorporated area of the County, there will be a significant increase in demands on local infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and public services. These impacts will extend beyond the boundaries of individual projects and may necessitate physical upgrades to existing public systems to accommodate the new demands.

In anticipate of potential improvements needed to local infrastructure, and to facilitate streamlined project review through Planning and Public Works and maintain compatibility between on-site and off-site improvements, the two departments are working collaboratively to develop offsite ODDS.

The offsite ODDS would address:

- **Circulation and Access:** Specific requirements for street widths, including sidewalk, vehicular and parking lane widths, and bicycle facility widths and type. Standards for on-street parking configurations and intersection design including curb ramps, crosswalks, and curb radii.
  - **Landscaping and Environment:** Quantitative rules for street trees, planting strips and lighting (e.g., specific lumens or fixture heights).
  - **Utilities:** Extending or relocating water, sewer, gas, and underground overhead electricity lines to connect the site to the main grid.
  - **Stormwater:** Managing increased runoff that can impact local drainage systems.
- Streetscape Amenities:** Benchmarks for street furniture, paving materials, and transit stops that prioritize safe and efficient circulation for all users.

These offsite ODDS will provide clear regulations that are consistently applied to all development projects. This consistency helps developers understand requirements, leading to more efficient planning and design. Additionally, these offsite ODDS help identify and mitigate impacts externally

to the specific development site. This ensures that new development is not only viable but also does not negatively affect the surrounding community and its infrastructure. Overall, the establishment of offsite ODDS is essential for promoting sustainable growth, maintaining community integrity, and ensuring that the planning process is equitable and efficient.

Given the breadth of Public Works development standards, a phased approach to updating offsite ODDS is proposed, with a first phase focused on revising roadway standards for development subject to the FBC, which is primarily future development in the City Centered and Baylands Corridors where most of the adopted housing opportunity sites are located in the unincorporated area. Code updates will be necessary in both the FBC in Title 22 and in Title 24 Roadways (Chapter I), Driveways (Chapter II), Parking and Loading (Chapter III), and Sidewalks and Pathways (Chapter IV).

A second phase of the study would address rural roadway design in the Inland Rural and Coastal Corridors. Later phases would update Title 24 code standards for intersections, crosswalks, landscaping, utilities, lighting, stormwater conveyance, and grading.

Following a consultant selection process conducted last fall, staff selected Opticos Design, Inc. and Toole Design for technical expertise. Opticos prepared the adopted Form-Based Code and are very familiar with these standards and with development character in Marin. Toole Design brings traffic and multimodal design and engineering expertise.

In developing the revised roadway standards, the consultants have utilized staff expertise in the Department of Public Works and Community Development Agency through meetings of an internal Working Group. The consultants also conducted a series of stakeholder meetings with locally active engineers, transportation consultants, developers, and representatives of utility districts (see meeting summaries included as Attachment 3).

The Planning Commission held a workshop on the proposed street standards on May 11, 2026 (see minutes included as Attachment 4 ). In response to comments from the Commission, the consultants have reduced the paved width for the alley street type, incorporated traffic-calming and pedestrian safety design features by requiring street bulb-outs at intersections to narrow the street dimension and reduce pedestrian crossing distances. The Commission also requested examples of existing street frontages for housing opportunity sites throughout the City-Centered Corridor to better understand how to treat improvement to these frontages upon new development. Visual and numeric examples of existing street frontages for housing sites are included as Attachment 5.

### **Proposed Roadway Standards**

To prepare revised roadway standards the consultants performed an audit of existing County code requirements and compared these with benchmarked examples from other jurisdictions and recognized professional design guidelines such as NACTO (Association of National American Cities and Transit Agencies), FHWA (Federal Highway Administration), and AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials). The proposed design standards are consistent with the California Complete Streets Act (AB 1358) which requires that streets be designed to accommodate all users, including motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. They are also consistent with Vision Zero strategies which seek to prevent traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries.

Title 24 Chapter I (Roadways) defines six different roadway classifications with differing requirements. The consultant team proposes to utilize the Title 24 roadway classifications and nomenclature as a framework for updating and augmenting street types and integrate the FBC public frontage types into a common code section in Title 24. As proposed, new Main Street (for mixed-use projects) and Alley street types would be added and the Residential Road and Minor Residential Road types would be combined. In total, there are 10 draft roadway configurations proposed to respond to differing land uses, traffic volumes, and inclusion of bicycle facilities, as summarized below:

| Roadway Type          | No. of travel lanes | Median/ Turn lane          | On-street parking | Bicycle      | Planting Strip | Sidewalk  |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|
| Residential Road      | 2 – 10'             | -                          | 8'                | -            | 5'             | 6'        |
| Alley                 | 2 – 10'             | -                          | -                 | -            | -              | 5' buffer |
| Main Street           | 2 – 10'             | -                          | 8'                | -            | 5'             | 10'       |
| Collector             | 2 – 10'             | -                          | 8'                | 12' Class IV | 6'             | 8'        |
| Arterial              | 2 – 11'             | 8' median or 11' turn lane | 8'                | 12' Class IV | 6'             | 8'        |
| Industrial/Commercial | 2 – 12'             | -                          | 8'                | -            | 6'             | 6'        |

Cross-sections and plan views of each proposed street classification showing minimum lane widths and configuration and frontage improvements are provided in Attachment 1.

Since review by the Planning Commission at a workshop on May 11, the following changes were made in the various street cross sections based on comments from the Commission, input from stakeholder meetings and input from Public Works staff:

- Residential Road: Parking lane width increased from 7' to 8' for accessibility standards and to decrease potential for sideswipes.
- Main Street: Walkway width reduced from 12' to 10'. Increase of planter/stormwater zone width from 4.5' to 5' for accessibility standards.
- Collector: Travel lane reduced from 11' to 10'. Class I shared use path on one side of the street.
- Arterial: Class I shared use path on one side of the street.
- Alley: 5' buffers replaced by 5 rear building setback from travel lanes.

### **Bicycle Facilities**

The proposed regulations would require Class I bicycle facilities be incorporated into new collector and arterial streets. For slower speed streets such as Residential and Main Street bicyclists would share the travel lane (Class III).

The proposed design for bicycle facilities has changed since that presented to the Planning Commission on May 11, 2026 based on feedback from the Marin County Bicycle Coalition. The sidewalk and on-street bikeways have been combined into a Class I shared-use pathway on one side of the street while a pedestrian sidewalk remains on the opposite side of the right-of-way. The Class I path is preferable because it separates cyclists from adjacent automobile traffic. The proposed Class I design is not currently included among the design configurations identified in the adopted Marin County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Accordingly, the Master Plan will need to be amended to recognize this configuration as an acceptable Class I facility, subject to adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

For improvement of existing street frontages by new development, installation of bicycle facilities would only be required if shown on the adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. For existing streets where the planned-for bicycle facility or sidewalks do not exist within 1,000 feet in either direction from the development site, up to 300 feet of the project frontage would not be required to install bicycle or sidewalk improvements but would be required to dedicate the necessary right-of-way called for by the newly adopted street classification design standards to allow for future street improvements.

### **Exceptions**

The proposed code edits include four exceptions to the street standards:

- Improvements to existing street frontages which do not meet the new design standards (e.g., width, configuration, presence of sidewalks or bicycle facilities) within 1000' feet in either direction from the subject site would be allowed to continue the existing street design for up to 300' along the property line, but would be required to dedicate sufficient right-of-way for a full frontage improvement from the centerline of the street to accommodate the applicable street design requirement to allow for future improvements.
- In situations where a new collector, arterial, or industrial/commercial road has no existing or anticipated development adjacent to it, on-street parking would not be required and a Class I shared-use path on only one side of the street would be allowed.
- A Class I shared-use path parallel to a street would be allowed as an alternative to a bike facility within the right-of-way.
- In a situation where an existing road is being improved, a Limited Residential Road classification (which excludes on-street parking) may be utilized if servicing six or fewer dwellings.

### **Proposed Minimum Safety Standards and Findings**

Several recent applications for housing development projects have utilized provisions of the State Density Bonus Law (Government Code § 65915(d)(1)(B)) that allow applicants to waive development standards. Local agencies may only deny waiver requests for registered historic properties or by adopting findings that the proposed waiver would result in specific and adverse health and safety impacts which cannot be feasibly mitigated. A "specific, adverse impact" is defined by the state law as "a significant, quantifiable, direct, and unavoidable impact, based on objective, identified written public health or safety standards, policies, or conditions as they existed on the date the application was deemed complete."

As part of the offsite ODDS project the consultant team has identified minimum street standards that are necessary for pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicular public health and safety. These minimum standards are proposed in Section 24.04.055 and the Board of Supervisors adoption ordinance will include findings that these minimum standards are required for public health and safety, and will include references to substantiating evidentiary sources. A memorandum from the transportation consultants identifies the minimum safety regulations, rationale and supporting documentation (see Attachment 6).

Based on analysis by the consultant team and County staff the following are proposed as minimum safety standards:

- Presence of sidewalks (to avoid requiring pedestrians to walk in travel lanes), with minimum width of 5 feet on Residential, Collector or Arterial, and Industrial/Commercial types street types and 6 feet on Main Street .
- Presence of landscape buffer strip or street tree planting area between the travel lane and sidewalk for pedestrian protection, with minimum width of four feet for all street types.
- Presence of on-street parking for certain roadway types(to separate and protect pedestrians from travel lanes on streets with higher traffic volumes or speed) with minimum width of 8 feet on Main Street, Collector, Arterial and Industrial/Commercial street types and 7 feet on Residential streets
- Minimum paved travel lane(s) width of 20 feet, or 26 feet for frontages where buildings exceed 3 stories or 30 feet in height (based on fire code standards).
- Provision of bicycle facilities based on public health benefits: Class I on Collector and Arterial types with minimum width of 10' for two-way shared-use paths.

### **Proposed Edits to Other Title 24 Code Sections**

In conjunction with developing the new and improved street classification definition and design standards discussed above, the Phase I ODDS update includes numerous targeted edits to existing regulations in Title 24 Chapters I (Roadways), II (Driveways), III (Parking and Loading), IV (Sidewalks and Pedestrian Paths) to eliminate subjective criteria and update dated regulations to current best practices (see Attachment 2). The following is a summary of the more substantive changes proposed:

- Inclusion of Class I shared-use path bicycle facilities on new Collector and Arterial streets (24.04.040),
- Inclusion of pedestrian crossing treatments (e.g., corner bulb-outs) and median refuges at new intersections (24.04.045),
- Exemptions as described above for extension of substandard streets, connector streets, parallel bike path option and allowance for Limited Residential Street type without on-street parking serving six or fewer homes (24.04.050),
- Incorporation of minimum safety standards as described above (24.04.055),
- Edits to maximum block length referencing the FBC in the City-Centered and Baylands Corridors (24.04.100),
- Deletion of turnaround regulations and diagrams, instead citing compliance with fire agency adopted standards (24.04.150),

- Edits to determination of minimum street structural section (24.04.200),
- Edit to street naming protocol, eliminating Planning Commission review and instead requiring approval by sheriff and fire agency based on criteria of precluding identical or similar proposed street names to those existing (24.04.210),
- Revision to the definition of “driveway” to better distinguish driveways from streets (24.04.235),
- Revision to parking requirements allowing development projects to count new on-street parking along the project frontage towards project parking requirements (24.04.335),
- Edits to sidewalk standards to cite federal accessibility requirements (24.04.435).

### **Applicability to Future Project Approvals**

As a general matter, when considering approval of an application for a tentative map under the Subdivision Map Act (Gov. Code §§ 66410-66499.41), the County may only apply those ordinances, policies, and standards that are in effect at the date the County determines the application is complete. See Gov. Code § 66474.2(a). However, that restriction does not apply where the County, before it has determined an application complete, has initiated and noticed proceedings to adopt new ordinances, policies, and standards. Gov. Code § 66474.2(b).

The Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution on April 10, 2026 to initiate proceedings to adopt ordinances, policies, and standards that will implement revised offsite ODDS as well as revisions to development impact fees which are being studied separately, and provide proper notice of the initiation of these proceedings. Doing so will ensure that the ODDS adopted in the future will apply to future developments involving vesting tentative map applications, even if the applications are deemed complete before the offsite ODDS and DIF are fully adopted. The offsite ODDS will also apply to other applications that do not involve a subdivision, including housing development applications, that are deemed complete after their adoption.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Consider the proposed offsite objective design and development standards for roadways in the City-Centered and Baylands Corridors and other revisions to Title 24 Chapters I (Roads) II (Driveways), III (Parking and Loading), IV (Sidewalks and Pedestrian Paths) and provide feedback.

Attachments:

1. Proposed Street Cross Sections
2. Proposed Edits to Title 24
3. Summary of Stakeholder Meetings
4. May 11, 2026 Planning Commission Workshop Minutes
5. Examples of Existing Street Frontages for Housing Opportunity Sites
6. Draft Memo on Minimum Safety Standards
7. PowerPoint Presentation