



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA DATE: August 25, 2026
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Alicia Stamps, Public Works, Senior Civil Engineer
REVIEWED BY: Christopher Blunk, P.E., Director of Public Works
SUBJECT: Offsite Objective Design and Development Standards (ODDS) Workshop

RECOMMENDATION: Receive and provide policy direction for the proposed Offsite Objective Design and Development Standards (ODDS) for offsite infrastructure improvements in advance of the ordinance adoption hearings.

SUMMARY: The County's current regulations related to offsite infrastructure development standards date back to the 1970s and include subjective design guidelines. [State laws](#) mandate that local governments use only objective standards to regulate housing development in many circumstances and further establish that certain standards can be waived by request of the developer unless specific requirements are met, such as where they are required to ensure compliance with specified environmental laws or have a qualifying public health or safety basis. The proposed ODDS for street design standards will replace subjective design guidelines with objective criteria that ensure a predictable and streamlined approval process for housing projects while maintaining safe and adequate public infrastructure.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND: 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. 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.

Need for Offsite Objective Design and Development Standards (ODDS)

Recent state legislation (e.g., [California's SB 330](#), the Housing Accountability Act, Assembly Bill 2011, Senate Bill 35/423, etc.) restrict counties to applying only objective standards when reviewing qualifying 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 the project review process.

To comply with these 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 anticipation of new infrastructure and potential improvements needed to local infrastructure associated with new subdivisions, and to facilitate streamlined project review through Planning and Public Works and maintain compatibility between onsite and offsite improvements, the two departments are working collaboratively to develop Offsite ODDS.

Offsite infrastructure regulations that warrant revisions to both ensure standards are objective and update standards to reflect present best practices include:

- **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.
- **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.

The 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.

Phased Approach

Given the breadth of Public Works development standards, a phased approach to updating Offsite ODDS is necessary.

The first phase is focused on revising street design standards for development subject to the FBC. This 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 related to street design 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 will address rural roadway design in the Inland, Rural and Coastal Corridors. Later phases will update Title 24 code standards for intersections, crosswalks, landscaping, utilities, lighting, stormwater conveyance, and grading.

Creation of the Standards

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 to the team.

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.

April 7, 2026 your Board held a hearing and made a finding that, "In accordance with Government Code section 66474.2(b)(1), and pursuant to the foregoing findings, the County of Marin intends to initiate proceedings to (1) adopt development impact fees to mitigate and address offsite impacts resulting from new developments within the unincorporated area of the County; and (2) adopt offsite objective design and development standards to ensure a predictable and streamlined approval process for housing projects while maintaining safe and adequate public infrastructure." The Planning Commission ("Commission") held workshops on the proposed street standards on May 11 and July 27, 2026 and held a public hearing on recommended edits to Title 22 on July 27, 2026. At that meeting the Commission recommended approval by the Board of Supervisors with the following comments:

- The Commission supported the proposed Class I shared-use pathway on one side of new collector and arterial streets but noted the need for enforcement of County regulations for e-bikes and scooters sharing the path with pedestrians;
- Suggested an introductory description of how Exceptions are granted, which has been added to the draft text;
- Commissioners noted that a wider right-of-way (ROW) dedication would result in fewer allowed units since density calculations are based on net land area excluding the ROW. However, it is noted that, developers can utilize the State Density Bonus Law to increase densities and the experience with recent development applications on housing opportunity sites suggest that developers prefer lower density project designs than the maximum densities assumed in the Housing Element.

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.

Two private street design options are also proposed for low density/low speed road sections with reduced design components. A Minor Residential Road would require on-street parking on one side of the street only but include sidewalks on both sides separated

by planting strips. A Shared Residential Road would be available for single-family developments only and maximum lengths of 150 feet and have no parking and no sidewalks. To compensate for lack of on-street parking minimum 20' driveway aprons in front of individual garages would be required. Street trees would be required within front yard setbacks.

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' both sides	Class III	5'	6' both sides
Alley	2 – 10'	-	-	-	-	5' buffer
Minor Residential Road (private only)	2 – 10'	-	8' one side	-	5'	6' both sides
Shared Residential Road	2 – 10'	-	-	-	-	-
Main Street	2 – 10'	-	8'	Class III	5'	10'
Collector	2 – 10'	-	8'	12' Class I	6'	8'
Arterial	2 – 11'	8' median or 11' turn lane	8'	12' Class I	6'	8'
Industrial/ Commercial	2 – 12'	-	8'	Class III	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.

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. Although the Master Plan does not establish mandatory roadway standards, staff recommends updating the Master plan to recognize this configuration as an acceptable Class I facility, subject to adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

Exceptions for bicycle facilities are discussed further below.

Exceptions

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

- 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 roadway frontage is being improved, a Limited Residential Road classification (which excludes on-street parking) may be utilized.
- Staff is considering an exception wherein 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, subject to appropriate agreements to ensure future construction, 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. For context, a compilation of existing frontages on several housing overlay sites is provided in Attachment 2.

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 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 to avoid specific adverse health and safety impacts on pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicular users. These minimum standards are proposed in Marin County Code 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, with references to substantiating evidentiary sources.

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 3). 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).

Proposed Amendments to the Development Code Title 22

As currently written, the Development Code (Dev Code) limits the application of the FBC to projects submitted pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 9 and SB 35, and to housing development applications proposed on Housing Element sites designated with a Housing Overlay Designation (HOD). Since the adoption of the FBC, the State has enacted additional housing legislation—including expanded provisions under SB 423/SB 35, SB 6, and AB 2011—that require ministerial or by-right approval of qualifying housing on properties that allow residential or commercial uses. In order to maintain consistency with State law and uphold objective development standards, staff recommends revising the Dev Code to require preparation of a Housing Compliance Review for any housing development project submitted pursuant to a state housing law that mandates ministerial or by-right approval.

The second reason for recommending revisions is to update the FBC and implement the proposed Offsite ODDS. Currently, the FBC regulates on-site building and site design, with a few regulations pertaining to off-site infrastructure in Section 04.060. This section contains requirements for sidewalk and planting strip widths and configurations for public frontage along three different street types, and it references roadway regulations in Title 24, Chapter I (Roadways) which divides roadway types into six street classifications. To make these roadway regulations consistent between Titles within the Municipal Code, staff proposes removing, updating, and relocating the Public Frontage Standards from the FBC to Title 24, Chapter I. Proposed Title 22 edits are provided as Attachment 4 and a summary of the proposed edits is as follows:

Title	Chapter/Section	Regulation
Form-Based Code	01.020 (Applicability)	Relocation of the Rules of Construction to new Section 10.020.
	01.020.2.E and 03.020.9 (Public Frontage Standards)	Reference added to Public Frontage Standards now in Title 24.
	Chapter 3 Zones (Building Placement)	Reduction to rear building setback adjacent to alleys.
	Chapter 3 Zones (Driveway)	Reference to compliance with fire code for min. driveway widths.

	Chapter 3 Zones (Frontages)	Reference to Title 24 for public frontage standards.
	04.030.4.B (Species Selection)	Reference changed from WUCOL species selection guidance to the County's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.
	04.040.4 (General Vehicular Parking Standards)	Reference parking dimensional standards in Title 24.
	04.060 (Standards for Public Frontages)	Delete section.
	05.140	Addition of the Stacked Flats building type
	09.030.1 (Existing Site Conditions)	List existing site conditions qualifying for adjustments.
	10.020 (Rules for Construction of Language)	Relocated from Applicability chapter.
	10.030 (Definitions)	Revisions to definitions.
Title 22	22.64.020 (Applicability)	Require submittal of a Housing Compliance Review application for any housing development project subject to ministerial approval.
	22.130.010 (Definitions)	Edits to definitions of "driveway" and "street"

POLICY FRAMEWORK: This is a new consideration before the Board. The work to develop Offsite ODDS aligns with the Housing Element of the Countywide Plan and State Law to provide ministerial review of development applications on housing element sites.

EQUITY IMPACT SUMMARY: The proposed Offsite ODDS promote equitable access to safe and accessible public infrastructure by establishing consistent, objective standards applicable to all qualifying development projects. The standards prioritize pedestrian accessibility, bicycle facilities, ADA-compliant sidewalks and crossings, traffic-calming measures, and Complete Streets principles that improve mobility and safety for users of all ages and abilities.

Objective standards also improve transparency and predictability in the development review process by ensuring that applicants are evaluated using the same measurable criteria, reducing subjectivity while supporting delivery of new housing throughout the County.

COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Development of the proposed Offsite ODDS included coordination between the Department of Public Works and Community Development Agency, internal interdisciplinary working group meetings, technical workshops with civil engineers, transportation consultants, developers, and utility providers, and two public workshops before the Planning Commission. Public meeting materials were made available and opportunities for public comment were provided throughout development of the standards.

Board feedback received during this workshop will be incorporated, as appropriate, into the final ordinance and accompanying Title 24 amendments before adoption.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Adoption of the Offsite ODDS is expected to provide the following benefits:

- Improves consistency, transparency, and predictability in the review of qualifying development applications.
- Reduces discretionary interpretation of engineering and infrastructure standards by establishing clear, objective criteria.
- Streamlines the development review process, resulting in more efficient processing of qualifying housing development applications.
- Supports compliance with applicable State housing laws by providing objective standards consistent with statutory requirements.
- Enhances roadway safety and multimodal accessibility through the incorporation of Complete Streets design principles.
- Establishes clear and objective offsite improvement standards that support long-term infrastructure planning, coordinated capital improvements, and consistent implementation of County policies.

CONTRACT RENEWALS / PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES: Not applicable for workshop.

CONTRACT RISKS: Not applicable for workshop.

CEQA ANALYSIS: This workshop is for informational and policy discussion purposes only and does not constitute project approval or a commitment to a specific course of action under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). No action taken during this workshop will result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable physical change in the environment.

Future adoption of the proposed Title 24 amendments and associated objective development standards will be accompanied by the appropriate CEQA review before Board consideration.

FISCAL, FACILITY & STAFFING ANALYSIS: There will be no increase to the General Fund net county cost as a result of your Board's action. Preparation and implementation of Phase 1 of the proposed Offsite ODDS have been funded through previously authorized appropriations, and no additional funding is required for this phase.

Adoption of the proposed standards is not anticipated to require additional County staffing or ongoing operational expenditures. Phase 1 will be implemented through existing Department of Public Works and Community Development Agency development review processes. Establishing objective standards is expected to improve review efficiency and reduce staff time associated with interpreting subjective design requirements.

Subsequent phases of the Offsite ODDS initiative will require additional funding and will be presented for consideration through separate future actions. This item is limited to Phase 1. Public infrastructure improvements associated with private development will continue to be constructed and funded by project applicants in accordance with County requirements.

ALTERNATIVES: The recommended action is to receive the presentation on the proposed Offsite ODDS and provide policy direction to staff prior to preparation of the ordinance for adoption.

Alternatives for Board Consideration

1. **Direct staff to proceed with preparation of the adoption ordinance** incorporating the proposed Offsite ODDS, with any modifications or policy direction provided by the Board.
2. **Direct staff to revise specific components of the proposed standards** and return to the Board with updated recommendations and a revised draft ordinance for further consideration.
3. **Maintain the existing development standards.** This alternative would retain the current discretionary provisions within Marin County Code Title 24, resulting in less consistent application of development standards, reduced alignment with current State housing law, and continued reliance on subjective review of offsite improvements. It would also limit the County's ability to implement the objective offsite development standards identified in the Housing Element.

ESTIMATED TIME (in minutes): 20-30

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Street Cross Sections
2. Housing Element Site Frontages
3. Proposed Edits to Title 24
4. Proposed Dev Code, Title 22, amendments
5. Presentation