



County of San Diego – *Spring Valley* Objective Design Standards Checklist

Design Review Checklists have been prepared to provide objective design standards (ODS) to conduct design review if utilizing State Legislation to streamline a housing development. If a project is found to be eligible for, and consistent with, the applicable State legislation permitting checklist, it will be exempt from the Site Plan Permit requirement of Section 5756. This objective design checklist has been created to provide measurable, verifiable, and clear objective design standards. The standards are based on Community Plan policies and Design Guidelines, as well as relevant policies from the General Plan and other adopted documents.

Design review is only one part of the development review process. Development projects are subject to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, as described in the [Zoning Ordinance Summary Brochure](#). The Zoning Ordinance addresses components of project development that impact design, such as building height, lot coverage, and setbacks, which are not duplicated on this checklist.

Key Zoning Ordinance sections pertaining to development and design include:

- Part One - Basic Provisions including definitions. See section 1100 - Definitions of Terms, for definition of street; usable open space, group; usable open space, private; landscaped street edge zone; and other terms used as a part of design review
- Part Four - Development Regulations including standards for density, lot size, building type, maximum floor area, floor area ratio, height, lot coverage, setbacks, and usable open space. For open space, see section 4900 (through 4999, inclusive) - Usable Open Space Regulations, when usable open space is the focus of a standard
- Part Five - Special Area Regulations including standards for Airport, Flood Plain, Historic and Scenic areas
- Part Six - General Regulations including parking, signage, outdoor lighting, fencing, and solar energy systems; see section 6700 - Screening Requirements, when screening is required per a standard

In addition, other County ordinances may have an impact on project development and design and must be consulted when applicable, including:

- County of San Diego 2023 Consolidated Fire Code or California Building Code
- Subdivision of Land – Title 8, Division 1
- Resource Protection – Title 8, Division 6, Chapter 6
- Water Conservation in Landscaping – Title 8, Division 6, Chapter 7, and Water Efficient Landscape Design Manual
- Grading, Clearing, and Watercourses – Title 8, Division 7
- Centerline – Title 5 sets requirements for right-of-way, street improvement standards, and setbacks
- Public Roads Standards
- San Diego Off-street Parking Manual
- Dark Sky Ordinance – Section 51.201 et seq.
- Watershed Protection Ordinance – Section 67.801 et seq. and associated manuals. See [2020 BMP Design Manual \(Complete\)](#)
- Other relevant land use regulations listed on the [Zoning Ordinance Summary](#) brochure (PDS-444)

As needed, a list of additional definitions related to design review may be developed for terms not found in Zoning Ordinance section 1100. If specific standards vary based on location, maps may be developed to understand where specific standards apply.



County of San Diego - Spring Valley
Objective Design Standards Checklist

SITE LAYOUT DESIGN STANDARDS				
		Guideline Reference	Y/N	Comments
Building Location & Orientation				
1	If a project provides pedestrian and vehicular linkages to adjacent developments, then it shall do so by connecting and aligning interior sidewalk(s), common entrance driveway(s), street(s), driveways, and common service/delivery areas. (See illustration for guidance)	IV.A(p54)		
2	At least 30 percent of the property's principal street frontage shall have buildings located along the front yard setback and/or landscape edge zone. (See illustration for guidance)	IV.A(p56)		
3	Each building shall have one façade that includes an entry that is adjacent to, and opens onto, an on-site usable open space, as defined in Section 1100 of the Zoning Ordinance. (See illustration for guidance)	IV.A(p56)		
Parking Lot Location, Access & Connections				
4	Parking lots between the front of a building and the primary street are prohibited.	IV.A(p54)		
5	All projects shall provide a landscaped edge zone, which is a minimum of 20 feet in depth, between the sidewalk and all buildings and/or parking improvements.	IV.A(p53)		
6	Parking lot entrances shall be located on secondary streets, except when a parcel only has access from only the primary street.	IV.A(p53)		
7	On-site vehicle parking and service entrances shall be marked with signage.	III.A(p20) III.B(p34)		



County of San Diego - Spring Valley
Objective Design Standards Checklist

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STANDARDS				
		Guideline Reference	Y/N	Comments
Building Form & Massing				
8	On buildings visible from public streets, every 50-foot length of building façade shall incorporate at least one of the following specified architectural features: offsets, projections, overhangs, or recesses.	IV.C(p59)		
9	Every building shall provide shade and shadow by incorporating at least two of the following specified architectural features: offsets, projections, roof overhangs, or recesses. (See illustrations for guidance)	IV.C(p59)		
10	If visible from public streets, rear facades shall be finished in the same color(s) and material(s) utilized on the principal sides of the building(s).	IV.C(p59)		
11	The height of the building’s top of wall, parapet, or cornice line shall be within three feet of the same element within the same story of that of adjacent buildings. Window lines, belt courses, and/or other horizontal elements shall be within three feet of the same element within the same story when present on neighboring buildings.	IV.C(p59)		
12	Each building entrance shall include at least one of the following specified architectural features: porch, loggia, and/or arbor.	IV.C(p61)		
Multi-Building Projects				
13	Facades and roof lines facing public streets and parking areas shall have the same colors and materials throughout the development.	IV.C(p60)		
Elevations & Building Façade Materials				
14	Building material changes shall only occur when there is a change in façade articulation or use of an architecture element on the façade including a chimney, projection, pilaster, or similar.	IV.C(p61)		
15	For both exterior walls and roofs, projects shall use at least one of the following materials: Exterior Walls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stucco over wood or masonry framing • Brick, adobe, and native stone • Wood siding in clear stain finishes • Cement plaster (stucco) in grey, white, or brown colors • Concrete or concrete masonry with textured surface • Exposed wood structural members • Metal buildings (only in the Olive Drive and Birch Street industrial district) Roofs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clay tile • Concrete tile • High profile composition shingles (laminated shingles made from fiberglass and asphalt, and textured to give a three-dimensional look) 	IV.C(p61)		
16	Windows shall be recessed to produce shadow lines.	IV.C(p61)		



County of San Diego - Spring Valley
Objective Design Standards Checklist

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STANDARDS		Guideline Reference	Y/N	Comments
Roof Forms				
17	Sloped roofs shall have at least one change in plane at a minimum of every 100 feet. (See illustration for guidance)	IV.B(p60)		
18	Changes in roof pitch and/or heights shall be accompanied by plan offsets. (See illustration for guidance)	IV.B(p60)		
19	Each building shall include at least one of the following roof forms: gabled, hip, or shed.	IV.B(p60)		
20	Eaves and roof overhangs shall create shadow lines. They shall shade glass surfaces to reduce the amount of direct sunlight hitting glass surface.	IV.B(p60)		
Fences & Walls				
21	When fences and walls are used for screening, foundation plantings of trees and shrubs at the base of fences and walls shall include automated irrigation. (See illustration for guidance)	IV.C(p62)		
22	Freestanding walls shall include a change of plane at least every 50 feet by using planting pockets, plan offsets, pilasters, or similar. (See illustration for guidance)	IV.C(p62)		
23	Fences and walls over three feet high that face public streets shall provide a landscaped buffer at least four feet deep on the street facing side of the wall. (See illustration for guidance)	IV.C(p62)		
24	Freestanding walls and/or fences shall be one of the following materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood • Brick • Native stone • Masonry with stucco finish • Wood framing with stucco finish • Wrought iron or other metal fence system 	IV.C(p62)		
25	The following freestanding wall and/or fencing materials are prohibited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chain link or open wire (except where screened by landscaping or otherwise allowed in the Olive Drive and Birch Street industrial areas) • Corrugated metal or plastic • Plastic- or plastic-coated materials 	IV.C(p62)		



County of San Diego - Spring Valley
Objective Design Standards Checklist

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS				
		Guideline Reference	Y/N	Comments
Design Concepts & Plant Selection				
26	All required side and rear yard setbacks shall be landscaped.	IV.A(p53)		
27	Projects shall use a minimum of three plants from the list Spring Valley Plant Selection Guide found in the Spring Valley Design Guidelines for the Special Districts of Bancroft, La Presa and Sweetwater Springs or the County Water Efficient Landscape Design Manual.	III.A(p21) III.B(35) III.C(p45) IV.A(p53) IV.D(p63)		
28	All site areas not used for buildings, parking, or other designated hardscape including sidewalks, group usable open spaces, or similar, shall be planted.	IV.D(p64)		
29	Projects shall include shrubs beneath the trees (instead of turf or ornamental ground covers), except in the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and other active use areas such as ball fields or areas proposed for recreational uses can use grass • Areas designated as group usable open space including seating/picnic, dining, gathering, or similar 	IV.D(p63)		
30	If groundcover plants are proposed, then they shall be shrubs, which shall be of a type that grow at least 30 inches in two years.	IV.D(p64)		
31	All shrubs used to provide a visual screen shall be of a type that will reach a minimum height of 30 inches after two years average growth.	IV.D(p64)		
Preservation of Significant Trees				
32	Removal of a tree with a diameter of more than six inches, or any with two trunks with a combined diameter of 10 inches, as measured four and one-half feet above the root crown, shall be prohibited.	IV.B(p57)		
Perimeter & Parking Lot Landscaping				
33	At least one tree shall be provided for every 300 square feet of the required street-facing landscape zones excluding driveways or other hardscape (e.g. sidewalks). Every parking space shall be located within 30 feet of a tree trunk. (See illustration for guidance) (In the Olive Drive and Birch Street industrial districts, this standard only applies to front yard parking lots or lots adjacent to non-industrial zones.)	IV.D(p64)		
34	All required trees shall be a minimum 24-inch box size, except when specified by another standard within this checklist.	IV.D(p63)		
35	One tree shall be planted for each 300 square feet of surface parking lot area. (See illustrations for guidance)	IV.D(p64)		
36	All parking areas with 10 or more spaces shall be surrounded by a minimum five-foot-wide landscaped planter, except for openings for driveways and pedestrian access.	IV.D(p64)		
37	There shall be a landscape edge zone, which is a minimum of five feet, between the edge of the parking lot and all buildings.	IV.A(p53)		



County of San Diego - Spring Valley
Objective Design Standards Checklist

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS		Guideline Reference	Y/N	Comments
Screening				
38	Surface parking lots shall be screened from view of public streets with at least one of the following: slopes, berms, shrubs, freestanding walls.	IV.F(p68)		
39	Trash containers and recycling containers shall be screened from view from public streets and pedestrian areas, when not placed for collection. The screen shall utilize at least one material that is utilized in the principal building.	IV.F(p68)		
40	Outdoor equipment and material storage areas shall be screened from view from public streets, pedestrian areas, and common open spaces.	IV.F(p69)		
41	Utility meters shall be located underground or screened, as defined in section 6700 the zoning ordinance.	IV.F(p69)		
42	Exterior surface mounted utility boxes shall be designed, painted, or screened to include the same colors and materials of the buildings to which they are attached.	IV.F(p69)		
43	Mechanical equipment, satellite dishes, communication devices, roof-mounted equipment, and similar equipment shall be screened from view from ground-level public streets and pedestrian areas.	IV.F(p69)		
44	Solar panels shall be screened from view at ground-level from public streets and pedestrian areas when placed on flat roofs.	IV.F(p69)		



County of San Diego - Spring Valley
Objective Design Standards Checklist

SIGNAGE DESIGN STANDARDS				
		Guideline Reference	Y/N	Comments
General Design Criteria				
44	External sign illumination shall be a shielded, top mounted, and downward directed light source that is shielded from view.	IV.E(p66)		
45	Internal illumination is only allowed for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual illuminated letters Panels where the background is opaque, and illumination is visible only through the individual letters or logos 	IV.E(p66)		
46	All signs and sign components shall have a maximum of three colors in addition to black and white.	IV.E(p66)		
47	Signs are prohibited above eave height or parapet top of the building.	IV.E(p66)		
48	Signposts and other structural elements shall be wood or metal with a white, black, brown, tan, green, or gray color, or clear stain finish.	IV.E(p66)		
Permitted Sign Types				
49	<p>The project signage shall be at least one of the following types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monument: A sign supported by one or more uprights or braces on the ground, not exceeding four feet in height. Wall: A sign affixed directly to an exterior wall or fence. Hanging: A sign attached to and located below any eave, canopy or awning, parallel or perpendicular to the building facade. Projecting: Any sign that projects from, and is supported by, a wall of a building with the display surface of the sign perpendicular to the building wall (not permitted in multi-family). Awning Valance: A sign or graphic attached to or printed on an awning's valance (not permitted in multi-family). Single Pole Hanging Sign: A sign that is suspended from a horizontal arm that is attached to a pole no higher than six feet in height. Kiosk: A freestanding structure which has one or more surfaces no more than eight feet in height (not permitted in industrial). Window: A sign affixed to or behind a window, no larger than 25 percent of the window on or behind which it is displayed (not permitted in multi-family). <p>(See illustrations for guidance)</p>	IV.E(p67)		
Prohibited Sign Types				
50	<p>The following signs are prohibited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roof signs and signs extended above the parapet or highest part of the building Pole signs over six feet in height Internally illuminated plastic box signs, unless opaque background with light projection only through the letters/logos Portable or mobile signs, except for sandwich or similar boards used by individual tenants 	IV.E(p67)		



County of San Diego - Spring Valley
Objective Design Standards Checklist

	SIGNAGE DESIGN STANDARDS	Guideline Reference	Y/N	Comments
	Multi-Family Residential Only Development			
51	A maximum of one sign to identify a single multi-family residential development for each entry from a public street or road.	IV.E(p66)		
52	Each sign area shall be limited to 10 square feet for projects of less than 25 dwelling units, and 15 square feet for projects with 25 or more dwelling units.	IV.E(p66)		
53	Letter and symbol height shall be a maximum of six inches.	IV.E(p66)		



County of San Diego - Spring Valley
Objective Design Standards Checklist

	LIGHTING DESIGN STANDARDS	Guideline Reference	Y/N	Comments
	Prevent Glare, Preserve Night Sky			
54	All outdoor lighting shall be directed downward and fully cut-off and shielded so that no light is emitted above the lowest light emitting part of the fixture.	IV.G(p70)		
	Size, Color & Materials			
55	All lights in residential parking areas shall be mounted at a maximum height of 12 feet.	IV.G(p70)		
56	Overhead walkway lighting shall have a maximum height of eight feet.	IV.G(p70)		

	MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL-ONLY DESIGN STANDARDS	Guideline Reference	Y/N	Comments
57	<p>A minimum of 100 square feet of Group Usable Open Space, as defined by Section 1100 of the Zoning Ordinance, per dwelling unit shall be provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For projects over 25 units with two bedrooms there shall be at least 1 children’s play area of 400 square feet. An additional 10 square feet of children’s play area shall be provided for each additional unit with two bedrooms over 25. For senior housing, a children’s play area can be substituted with a picnic area or similar. 	IV.A(p56)		
58	<p>A minimum of 100 square feet of Private Usable Open Space, as defined by Section 1100 of the Zoning Ordinance, per dwelling unit shall be provided and includes the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is directly accessible from the unit Has spaces with a minimum dimension of eight feet For upper floor decks used for private space, have a minimum dimension of four feet 	IV.A(p56)		
59	Parking lots shall be located to the side, rear or an internal location on the property. Parking lots between the front of the building and the primary street is prohibited.	IV.A(p55)		
60	In projects without a common parking garage, garage doors shall not face a public street. This does not apply if the lot has less than 100 feet of street frontage or if the lot is on a corner. On corner lots, the garage doors shall open to the side street.	IV.A(p54)		
61	Projects with a common enclosed parking garage shall have no more than one garage door that opens toward each street.	IV.A(p54)		
62	The design of carports and garages shall have a minimum of two of the same colors and materials that are present on the principal building.	IV.A(p55)		
63	A minimum of one parking space wide pocket planted with at least one tree shall be provided for every eight continuous perpendicular or angled parking spaces.	IV.A(p55)		
64	Parking drive aisles around the perimeter of developments shall be prohibited.	IV.A(p55)		



County of San Diego - Spring Valley
Objective Design Standards Checklist

Applicant hereby agrees to comply with the applicable design review checklist standards; all applicable Federal, State, and Local laws and regulations, including but not limited to the County's Centerline, Watershed Protection, and Landscape Ordinances, for the life of the project, or until modified by a subsequent development approval; and he/she understands that additional changes to the project may be required prior to issuance of a building permit to ensure compliance with these regulations.

Applicant

Date

The Spring Valley Design Review Board hereby confirms that the proposed project complies with all of the applicable design review standards provided compliance with the applicable design review checklist standards is maintained as agreed by the Applicant above.

Chairman, Design Review Board

Date

Project and Property Owner Information:

APN(s): _____ Project Address: _____

Owner's Name: _____ E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Owner's Mailing Address: _____

Agent's Name: _____ E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

(If applicable)

Agent's Mailing Address: _____

Brief description of the project:

