



December 16, 2024

Mayor Brett Taylor
City Council Members
Visalia City Hall
707 W. Acequia Ave.
Visalia, CA, 93291

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION TO ZONING ORDINANCE 2024-16 &
ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 2024-03

Dear Council members and Mayor,

I am writing in opposition to the proposed zoning ordinance & text amendment referenced above, specifically as relates to altering design standards for single family residential development.

Housing Crisis – The State of California is in dire need of housing. Adoption of the amendment will result in additional time to design new product lines specific to Visalia. Our Division operates geographically from Merced to Bakersfield with a plan library consistent throughout the Division. The proposed amendment would require a “Visalia specific” plan set. This is problematic for several reasons: 1) design specificity delays production speed and 2) specificity proposed in the text amendment affects every aspect of the production homebuilding process (design, purchasing, execution). In short, adherence to the amendment will slow down the process of delivering homes in Visalia. I ask that you consider whether adjusting design standards at this critical time is the best way to address the current housing crisis.

Affordability – Our goal is to provide entry-level market rate homes throughout the Central Valley. The design features proposed will require a minimum projected increase of 20% to home prices for our product in Visalia. This is particularly acute in the sections of the ordinance requiring structural modifications, not merely elevation enhancements. An example is Section B.1.b.iii. (1) & (2) Garage placement; Subsection (1) would require structural re-design to meet proposed garage setbacks and (2) with pressure for higher densities (smaller lots, 40 x 100) in single-family zones it is not possible for a 20’ wide garage to be less than 50% of the total width of the structure. Our current plan library would not satisfy that requirement.

Section B.2.c.iv is also problematic as we currently provide walkways extending from the driveway to the home entry not from the public sidewalk to the front door. This proposed design change directly contributes to an increase in material/labor costs for no other purpose than to achieve an aesthetic preference that the market is not demanding.

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And finally, all of Section C. subsection 1 as related to “Massing” will result in major structural re-design and addition of “Visalia specific” plans to our plan library. Interestingly the subsection is intended to “provide for visually interesting structures” which is a subjective judgement that will have long-term financial consequences. Complying with this subsection will dramatically impact home prices by at least 20% compared to current market prices. I respectfully request the financial consequences be considered before amending the zoning ordinance to approve the subjective aesthetic requirements proposed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Corine Demetrios

Corine Demetrios
Division Vice President of Forward Planning & Land Development
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