



**| State and Local Government Affairs Department**

December 16, 2024

Mayor Brett Taylor, Mayor  
Member of the City Council  
**City of Visalia**  
220 N. Santa Fe St  
Visalia, CA 93292

*Submitted via Email Only*

**Subject:           Agenda Item File #24-0522  
December 16, 2024 City Council Meeting  
Proposal to Create Single Family Residential Objective Design Standards**

Dear Mayor Taylor and Members of the Visalia City Council:

**Request**

In partnership with the Building Industry Association of Tulare-Kings Counties (BIATKC) and our builder members, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) supports the request for the City of Visalia City Council to postpone taking action on the proposed Single Family Residential Objective Design Guidelines (Agenda Item #24-0522) for a period of up to 120 days. This request is made consistent with Department Recommendation #2, so as to provide adequate and additional time for further input on these proposed Standards from a critical stake holder, namely the new home building industry, and to facilitate collaboration with City staff to develop a mutually beneficial and financially feasible community design program going forward.

**Background**

In conversations with the BIATKC, we learned that the City of Visalia (City) is moving forward with a set of "Objective Design Guidelines" which will add significant costs and requirements to the construction of new single-family homes. While we appreciate and share in the City's desire to build attractive homes and neighborhoods, our partner members as key stakeholders were not adequately consulted with during the preparation of this draft proposal. Further, given the severe shortage of attainable housing throughout our State and nation; home buyers are increasingly sensitive to additional cost increases and higher prices for new homes.

NAHB's estimates for 2024 indicate that 103.5 million households—76.9% of all U.S. households—are already not able to afford a median priced new home. Our models further indicate that a \$1,000 increase in the median price of a new home would price an additional 106,031 households out of the market, and that a 25-basis point increase in the 30-year fixed mortgage rate (from 6.50% to 6.75%) would price approximately 1.1 million households from the housing market. Therefore, today's buyers are hyper-sensitive to even the most modest additional cost increases in new home construction.

NAHB is a Washington, D.C.-based trade association that includes as part of its federation more than 700 affiliated state and local associations in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The NAHB mission is to protect the American Dream of housing opportunities for all. Our thousands of builder members are proud to construct over 80 percent of the housing units produced every year in the United States. Our members include small-volume builders, production builders, multifamily builders, modular housing companies, and residential remodelers. In addition, NAHB includes associate members who span the spectrum of the housing industry, including suppliers, service providers, and product manufacturers.

NAHB works to ensure that all Americans have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing. A healthy housing market includes housing that serves buyers at all socioeconomic levels, including houses for first time homebuyers and lower- to middle-income purchasers. In particular, many of these middle-income purchasers include those in the military, teachers, and first responders. The location and availability of attainable housing has a major influence on the overall health of a family unit, and determines what school's children can attend, proximity to jobs, access to childcare, and even affects how much time a family spends together at the end of the day.

### **Conclusion**

NAHB joins the BIATKC in asking the City Council to pause on moving these Design Guidelines forward and allow our members to work in a collaborative manner with City staff to find solutions which are feasible in helping to advance quality housing and affordability.

NAHB remains hopeful that the City can create a set of Design Guidelines that promotes the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens without adding costly construction materials or design features, and without pricing out scores of potential homeowners.

Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Respectfully,

**National Association of Home Builders**

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