



**City of St. Helena
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 2, 2025 @ 6:00 PM
Vintage Hall Board Room - Second Floor
465 Main Street, St. Helena**

PLEASE NOTE: Any person who wishes to speak regarding an item on the agenda or make a comment under the "Oral Communication" portion of the agenda may do so, but please observe the time limit of four minutes.

The Planning Commission meeting will be live-streamed on Comcast Channel 28 and on the City's website. Public comment for Planning Commission meetings will be accepted via email to publiccomment@cityofstheleena.gov. All public comments must be emailed at least three hours prior to the meeting. Emailed public comments will not be read out loud but will be publicly available and attached to the on-line agenda.

Simultaneous Spanish interpretation services during meetings can be scheduled upon request. To ensure interpreters are available, requests must be made at least 72 hours in advance by calling the Office of the City Clerk at (707) 968-2640 or emailing cityclerk@cityofstheleena.gov.

The schedule of upcoming meetings and published meeting agendas can be found on the City of St. Helena website at <https://stheleena.civicweb.net/portal/>.

Servicios de interpretación en español durante la reunión pueden ser solicitados por el público. Para asegurar que los intérpretes estén disponibles, los servicios tienen que ser solicitados al menos 72 horas antes de la reunión llamando a la oficina de la Secretaria de la Ciudad al (707) 968-2640 o por correo electrónico a cityclerk@cityofstheleena.gov.

El horario de las reuniones publicadas y próximas puede ser localizado en el sitio de web de la Ciudad en <https://stheleena.civicweb.net/portal/>.

Page

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
2. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL
Chair: Chris Warner
Vice-Chair: Sue Furdek,
Commissioners: Autumn Anderson, Michelle Covell, and Hector Lopez

City staff present at the meeting will be noted in the minutes.
3. PUBLIC FORUM:
This is an opportunity for the public to address the Commission on items of interest to the public that are NOT listed on the agenda. Because of restrictions imposed by the Brown Act, the Commission may not engage in discussion nor take action on matters not described on the agenda. **Please observe the time limit of four minutes.**
4. CONSENT ITEMS
Members of the Commission or the public may ask that any items be

considered individually for purposes of considering alternative action, for extended discussion, or for public comment. Unless that is done, one motion may be used to adopt all recommended actions. (Roll Call Vote)

4.1. Approval of Minutes: August 19, 2025

5 - 7

[Planning Commission Minutes 08.19.25](#)

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

5.1. Zoning Ordinance Amendment to revise Chapters 17.24.050 B (1) and 17.32, Definition of Terms, Visibility Triangle, of Title 17 of the St. Helena Municipal Code regarding standards for vision triangles.

9 - 38

CEQA Determination: Exempt

Prepared By: Maya DeRosa, Community Development Director

Recommendation:

Recommend that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending the City Council: 1) Find that, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15061 (b) (3) the project is Exempt; and 2) Adopt an ordinance amending Sections 17.24.050 B (1) and 17.32, Definition of Terms, Visibility Triangle, of Title 17 of the St. Helena Municipal Code (ZOA 25-003).

[ZOA Definition of Terms, Visibility Triangle- Staff Report](#)

[PPT Presentation- ZOA visibility triangle](#)

6. SCHEDULED MATTERS

None.

7. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

This is an opportunity for staff to report on or update the Commission on any relevant matters.

8. AGENDA FORCAST

This is an opportunity for the Commission as a whole to request items be placed on future agendas for discussion. These items should be consistent with, and work to implement adopted Council Goals.

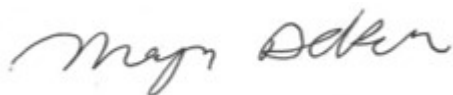
A list of current planning projects is available on our city website in the link below:

<https://cityofsthenelena.org/230/Planning-Projects>

9. ADJOURNMENT

The next Regular Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Vintage Hall Board Room located at 465 Main Street.

This agenda was posted at City Hall, 1088 College Avenue, and at Vintage Hall, 465 Main Street, St. Helena, California on August 26, 2025.



Maya DeRosa, Community Development Director

Appeal. A person who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Planning Commission may appeal that decision to the City Council pursuant to Municipal Code Section 17.12.020, Appeal procedure. Actions of the Planning Commission will be listed on the City Council agenda the following Tuesday to give the City Council opportunity to review the Planning Commission's decision. Absent of an appeal by the City Council or by a citizen, the appeal period will terminate two weeks after the Planning Commission hearing.

Special Assistance for the Disabled. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please call the City Clerk's Office (707) 967-2792. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting (28 CFR35.102-35.104 ADA Title II). However, City staff will attempt to assist at any time with accessibility. The City Clerk has equipment to assist those with a hearing impairment.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY PROCEDURES

Pursuant to the Government Code Section 54954.3, the public may address the Commission on each agenda item during the Commission's consideration of that item. Each speaker has the option to state his or her name for the record before testifying. Depending on the number of speakers or the interest of the item, the Planning Commission Chairman may also restrict, at his/her discretion, the speaker's time to three minutes. The Chairman may also restrict public comments if they become irrelevant to the agenda item or repetitious of prior comments. All persons interested may appear and be heard or submit written statements prior to the Planning Commission meeting. Please note that if you challenge the City's decision on any of these matters in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the meeting or in written correspondence delivered to the City at, or prior to, the meeting.

CHALLENGING DECISIONS OF CITY ENTITIES

The time limit within which to commence any lawsuit or legal challenge to any quasi-adjudicative decision made by the City of St. Helena is governed by Section 1094.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure, unless a shorter limitation period is specified by any other provision, including without limitation Government Code section 65009 applicable to many land use and zoning decisions, Government Code section 66499.37 applicable to the Subdivision Map Act, and Public Resources Code section 21167 applicable to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under Section 1094.6, any lawsuit or legal challenge to any quasi-adjudicative decision made by the City must be filed no later than the 90th day following the date on which such decision becomes final. Any lawsuit or legal challenge, which is not filed within that 90-day period, will be barred. Government Code section 65009 and 66499.37, and Public Resources Code section 21167, impose shorter limitations periods and requirements, including timely service in addition to filing.

If a person wishes to challenge the above actions in court, they may be limited to raising only those issues they or someone else raised at the meeting

described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of St. Helena, at or prior to the meeting. In addition, judicial challenge may be limited or barred where the interested party has not sought and exhausted all available administrative remedies.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL RECEIVED AFTER THE POSTING OF THE AGENDA

Any supplemental writings or documents distributed to a majority of the Planning Commission regarding any item on this Agenda, after the posting of the Agenda, will be available for public review in the Planning Department's Office located at 1088 College Avenue, St. Helena, California, during normal business hours. In addition, such writings or documents will be made available on the City's web site at <http://cityofstheleena.org> and will be available for public review at the respective meeting.

MINUTES
City of St. Helena
Planning Commission Meeting
Tuesday, August 19, 2025 @ 7:00 PM
Vintage Hall Board Room - Second Floor
465 Main Street, St. Helena

****Planning Commission meeting began at 7: 53 p.m.****

A complete video recording of this meeting can be found at <https://sthelena.civicweb.net/Portal/> or by calling the City Clerk at (707) 967-2792. The Planning Commission video is the official record of the Planning Commission meeting.

Present: Acting Chair Christopher Warner, Commissioner Sue Furdek, Commissioner Hector Lopez, Commissioner Michelle Covell, and Commissioner Autumn Anderson.

Absent: None

Staff Present: Maya DeRosa, Community Development Director, Andreas Booher, City Attorney, and Xinia Gamero, Planning Commission Secretary

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

3. PUBLIC FORUM:

None.

4. CONSENT ITEMS

4.1 Approval of Minutes: June 17, 2025

Commissioner Sue Furdek moved to approve the Minutes on the consent calendar. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hector Lopez and on roll call carried by the following vote:

AYES: Christopher Warner, Hector Lopez, Autumn Anderson, and Sue Furdek

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: Michelle Covell

RECUSE: None

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

6. SCHEDULED MATTERS

6.1 Nomination and election of a new Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair and designation of the Commission Secretary.

Prepared By: Xinia Gamero, Permit Technician III

Commissioner Sue Furdek nominated Christopher Warner to serve as the Chair of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hector Lopez and on roll call carried by the following vote:

AYES: Christopher Warner, Hector Lopez, Michelle Covell, Autumn Anderson, and Sue Furdek

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

RECUSE: None

Commissioner Autumn Anderson nominated Sue Furdek to serve as the Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Chair Christopher Warner and on roll call carried by the following vote:

AYES: Christopher Warner, Hector Lopez, Michelle Covell, Autumn Anderson, and Sue Furdek

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

RECUSE: None

Chair Christopher Warner nominated Xinia Gamero to continue serving as Planning Commission Secretary. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hector Lopez and on roll call carried by the following vote:

AYES: Christopher Warner, Hector Lopez, Michelle Covell, Autumn Anderson, and Sue Furdek

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

RECUSE: None

7. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Community Development Director Maya DeRosa reported on the following:

- The Planning Commission meeting of September 2 will include the Vision Triangle Zoning Ordinance Amendment.
- Planning Commission meeting of September 16 is cancelled.
- The Planning Commission meeting on October 7 will feature the Covered Porches Zoning Ordinance Amendment, along with additional project items.

Chair Warner requested that staff provide updates on the following items at future meetings:

- Discussion to gather input on the new Zoning Code.

- Follow-up meeting to address questions raised during the Joint City Council & Planning Commission Housing Legislation Study Session.

8. AGENDA FORCAST

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Warner adjourned the meeting at **8:21 p.m.**

The August 19, 2025 minutes were approved at the _____
Planning Commission meeting.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Christopher Warner, Chair Planning
Commission

Maya DeRosa, AICP
Community Development Director



PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Planning Commission Meeting of September 2, 2025

FILE NUMBER: ZOA 25-003

SUBJECT: Zoning Ordinance Amendment to revise Chapters 17.24.050 B (1) and 17.32, Definition of Terms, Visibility Triangle, of Title 17 of the St. Helena Municipal Code regarding standards for vision triangles.

PREPARED BY: Maya DeRosa, Community Development Director

REVIEWED BY: Maya DeRosa, Community Development Director

APPROVED BY: Maya DeRosa, Community Development Director

BACKGROUND

The St Helena Municipal Code (SHMC) 17.24.050.B (1) states the height requirements for any fences, walls and hedges within the “visibility triangle” shall not exceed 2 feet.

Additionally SHMC Chapter 17.32 defines “visibility triangle” as the following: “Visibility triangle” means, on a corner lot, the triangle formed by lines extended from the face of the curb to their intersection and a line connecting the face of the curb extensions measured thirty-five (35) feet from their point of intersection. If no curb exists, the edge of the roadway or vehicular travel area shall be used as the point of measurement. The code requirement for visibility triangle standards has been in effect for decades and was reaffirmed in the recent comprehensive zoning code revision in October 2023.

The Public Works Department has a City Standard (since 1993) that conflicts with the current Municipal Code stated above in relation to the visibility triangle. “City of St. Helena Visibility and Fencing Requirements Standard No. 324” (Attachment 3) sets the visibility triangle at 25 feet from the corner and has been referenced and used in the approval of several building projects as recently as November 2023. (Note the other information provided in this standard is outdated and Public Works intends to update following the outcome of any action by the City Council on vision triangle standards).

The differing Public Works standard for minimum length of the visibility triangle and Ordinance has led to confusion amongst city staff and members of community when attempting to bring properties into compliance.

In January 2024 the Fire Chief and Fire Inspector at the request of the City Manager, examined all 299 corners in the City of St. Helena. According to the SHMC visibility triangle requirements of 35 feet and maximum 2 ft. fence height, 66 corners were found to be out of compliance. Later in 2024 a marketing campaign was launched to inform the public about the enforcement of the SHMC Visibility Triangle requirements.

As of April 2025, the number of corners out of compliance has reduced to 26.

When applying the Public Works Standard No. 324 requirement of 25 feet, the number of corners out of compliance reduces to 9.

On May 20, 2025, the Planning Commission discussed the code compliance issues above, current visibility triangle standards and options for amending the zoning code to make the code more effective. The Planning Commission provided direction that they were open to increasing the allowable height within the visibility triangle, as long as the standard was not over 42 inches as the allowable height for fences, walls and hedges within the triangle. The Planning Commission also directed staff that the proposal to reduce the codified standard for the length of the vision triangle from 35 to 25 feet was acceptable.

ANALYSIS

While the Fire Chief and Fire Inspector were investigating all 299 corners in the city, only 2 corner fences met the 2 ft. height requirement listed in the SHMC. The remaining corners with fences and walls were all at or below 42 inches except for the tennis court chain link fence at the southwest corner of Spring Mtn. Rd and Hillview Place which has a city approved variance. Some of the corners had vegetation more than 42 inches in height which will need to be addressed by the property owners.

In considering the safety factors related to changing the vision triangle standards as noted in this report, the Police Department was consulted and they did not have concerns with the increased allowable height of 42 inches within the vision triangle nor did they have concern with the 25 foot allowable length. Additionally there is data from Caltrans that the line of sight for a driver is at 42 inches high, therefore this should be the maximum height within a visibility triangle.

As part of the research for this ZOA, Planning staff conducted research of vision triangle zoning standards in other surrounding cities (Attachment 4). There was a fair amount of variation in standards for both the length of the vision triangle and allowable height within the vision triangle.

Adjusting the SHMC visibility triangle definition in SHMC Chapter 17.32 to match that of 25 foot length noted in Public Work Standard No. 324 and also increasing the allowable height within the vision triangle in SHMC 17.24.050 B (1) from 2 feet to 42 inches would allow the majority of existing fences on corners to remain in compliance. The resolution (Attachment 1) and ordinance (Attachment 2) as part of this staff report memorialize these proposed changes to the zoning ordinance.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending the City Council: 1) Find that, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15061 (b) (3) the project is Exempt; and 2) Adopt an ordinance amending Sections 17.24.050 B (1) and 17.32, Definition of Terms, Visibility Triangle, of Title 17 of the St. Helena Municipal Code (ZOA 25-003).

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment 1 - Resolution for Zoning Ordinance Amendment-ZOA25-003 Vision Triangle](#)

[Attachment 2-Ordinance - Vision Triangle Standards](#)

[Attachment 3-Public-Works-City-Standards 324](#)

[Attachment 4- Vision Triangle Standards from other cities Jan 2024](#)

CITY OF ST. HELENA PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. PC2025-

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF
THE CITY OF ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA,
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT AN
ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 17 (ZONING) OF THE
ST. HELENA MUNICIPAL CODE (ZOA 25-003), TO
AMEND VISIBILITY TRIANGLE STANDARDS**

Recitals

WHEREAS, the City of St. Helena, California ("City") is a municipal corporation, duly organized under the constitution and laws of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to amend its Zoning Code (ZOA 25-003), codified as Title 17 of the St. Helena Municipal Code ("SHMC"); and

WHEREAS, the City now proposes to amend a provision of its Zoning Code, Title 17 of the SHMC; and

WHEREAS, staff and the City Attorney prepared the proposed ordinance, including any additional information and documents deemed necessary for the Planning Commission to take action; and

WHEREAS, the City gave public notice of the public hearing for the proposed ordinance by publishing in the Napa Valley Register; and

WHEREAS, on September 2, 2025, the Planning Commission held a duly-noticed public hearing and considered the staff report, recommendations by staff, and public testimony concerning the proposed ordinance.

WHEREAS, all other legal prerequisites to the adoption of this resolution have occurred.

Resolution

NOW THEREFORE, THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ST. HELENA DOES RESOLVE, DETERMINE, FIND AND ORDER AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. **Recitals.** The above recitals are incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2. **Compliance with CEQA.** The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council find that the proposed ordinance amendment is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3).

Section 3. **General Plan Consistency.** Based on the entire record before the Planning Commission, and all written and oral evidence presented, the Planning Commission hereby finds that the proposed ordinance is consistent with the City's adopted General Plan. The proposed ordinance does not otherwise conflict with any of the General Plan's goals or policies.

Section 4. **Zoning Ordinance Amendment 25-003.** The Planning Commission hereby recommends that the City Council adopt the attached proposed ordinance (**Attachment A**) entitled:

An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of St. Helena amending Section 17.24.050 B(1) and Chapter 17.32 (Definitions) of Title 17 of the St. Helena Municipal Code (ZOA 25-003) regarding standards for visibility triangles.

Section 7. The proposed ordinance entitled "An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of St. Helena, California, Amending Section 17.24.050 B(1) and Chapter 17.32 (Definitions) of Title 17 of the St. Helena Municipal Code regarding standards for visibility triangles is on file and has been available for public review for at least ten days prior to the date of this Resolution, in the Community Development Department, at St. Helena City Hall, 1088 College Avenue.

Section 8. Severable. If any part of this Resolution is held by a court to be invalid, that part is severable from the rest and every other part remains unaffected and in effect.

(Signatures on following page)

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing recommendation to the City Council was duly and regularly approved by the Planning Commission of the City of St. Helena at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission held on September 2, 2025 by the following roll call vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Christopher Warner
Chair, Planning Commission

Maya DeRosa, AICP
Community Development
Director

Exhibit “A”

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ST. HELENA
AMENDING SECTION 17.24.050 B(1) AND CHAPTER 17.32 (DEFINITIONS) OF
TITLE 17 OF THE ST. HELENA MUNICIPAL CODE (ZOA 25-003) REGARDING
STANDARDS FOR VISIBILITY TRIANGLES**

WHEREAS, Title 17 of the St. Helena Municipal Code (SHMC) includes standards for visibility triangles and also define how they are measured; and

WHEREAS, SHMC Section 17.24.050 B(1) establishes specific standards for the maximum height of fences and hedges within visibility triangles; and

WHEREAS, SHMC Chapter 17.32 includes a definition of a visibility triangle and how they are measured which includes Figure 17.32 E ; and

WHEREAS, the January 2024 the City completed a visual survey of all corner properties and determined that the maximum height allowance of 2 feet and the long 35 foot length of the vision triangle measurement created challenges for properties to comply with the zoning ordinance ; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to amend SHMC section 17.24.050 B(1) and Chapter 17.32, to have visibility triangle standards which provide more flexibility for property owners, yet still ensure safety requirements at intersections are met; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing at a Regular Meeting on September 2, 2025, on the proposed Ordinance during which public hearing the Planning Commission received comments from City staff and members of the general public and recommended approval to the City Council through Resolution No. _____; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a duly noticed public hearing on _____, 2025 on the proposed Ordinance, during which public hearing the City Council received comments from City staff and members of the general public; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to approve the requested amendments to Section 17.30.030.E of the St. Helena Municipal Code through approval of this Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of St. Helena does hereby ordain as follows:

Section 1. Recitals. The above recitals are incorporated as though set forth in this section.

Section 2. Amendment. Please see below (new language is underlined, deletions are in ~~strikeout~~):

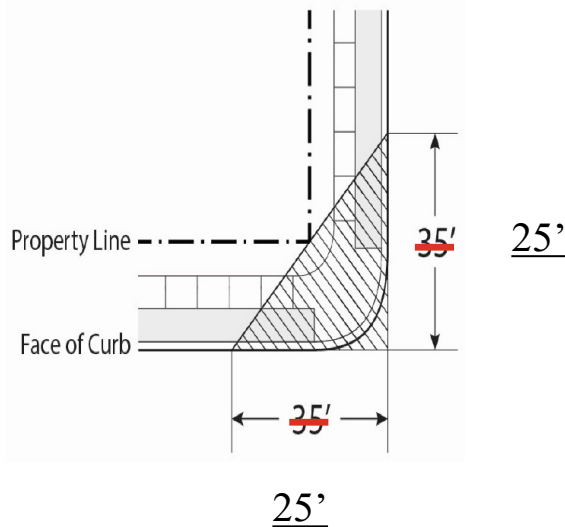
Subsection B (1) of Section 17.24.050 of the St. Helena Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows

1. Fences, hedges, or dense planting in the form of a hedge shall not exceed two feet forty-two inches in height when located in the visibility triangle as defined in Part V, Definitions and Rules of Measurement.

Chapter 17.32, Definition of Terms, Visibility Triangle

Visibility triangle. On a corner lot, the triangle formed by lines extended from the face of the curb to their intersection and a line connecting the face of the curb extensions measured twenty five (25) 35 feet from their point of intersection. If no curb exists, the edge of the roadway or vehicular travel area shall be used as the point of measurement.

Figure 17.32(E). Visibility Triangle



Section 3. Severability. If any section, subsection, phrase, or clause of this ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the

validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The City Council would have passed this ordinance and each and every section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase not declared invalid or unconstitutional without regard to whether any portion of the ordinance would be subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional.

Section 4. CEQA. This ordinance was assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines (the Guidelines), and the environmental regulations of the City. The City Council hereby finds that this ordinance is exempt from review under CEQA under Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines because it can be seen with certainty that the provisions contained herein would not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

Section 5. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall take effect and be enforced within thirty (30) days from and after the date of its adoption by the City Council at a second reading and shall be posted and published in accordance with the California Government Code.

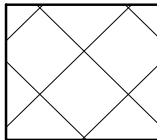
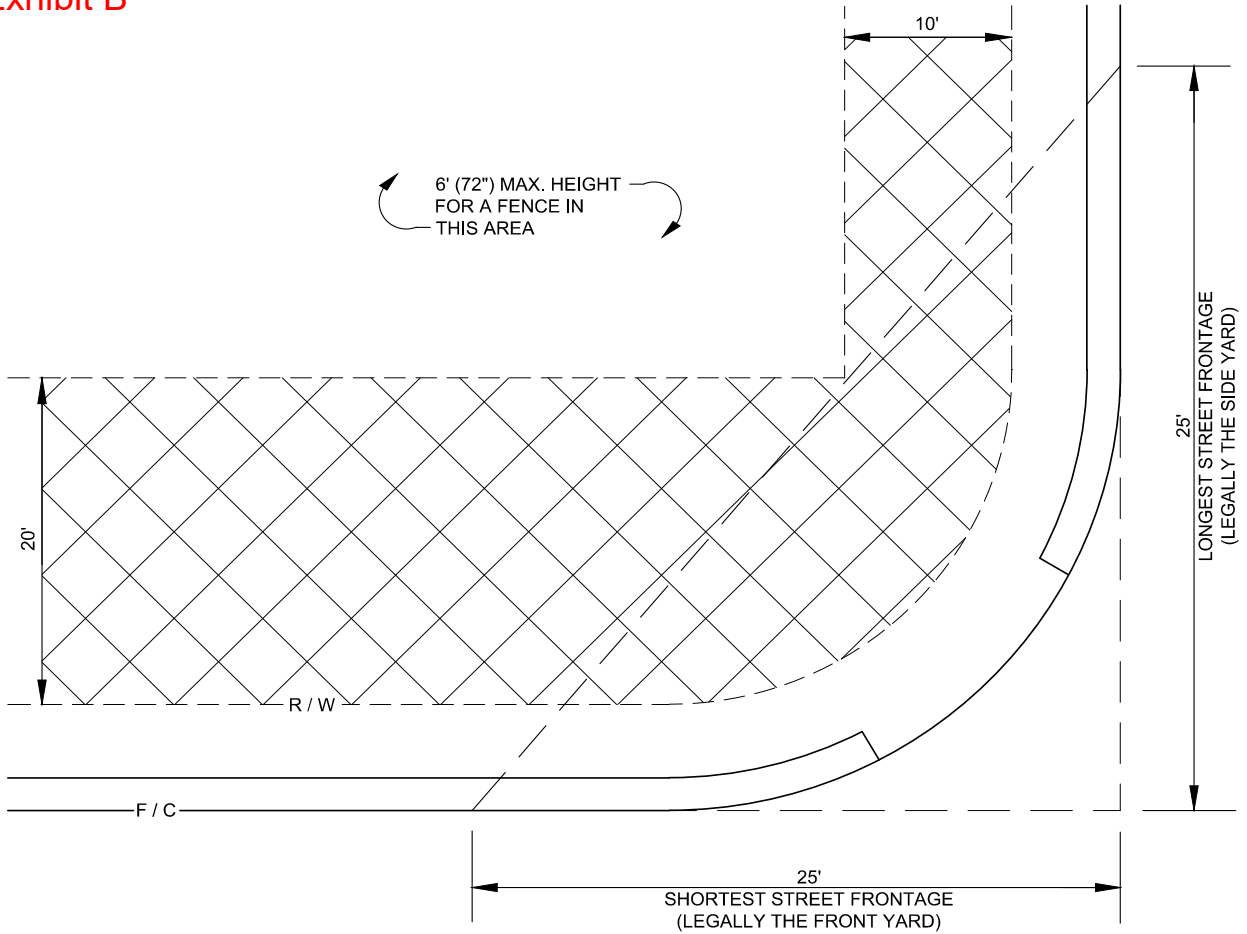
THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE was introduced at a regular meeting of the St. Helena City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2025, and was adopted at a regular meeting of the St. Helena City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

ATTEST: _____
Andrew Bradley, City Clerk

APPROVED: _____
Paul Dohring, Mayor

Exhibit B



WITHIN THIS AREA ALL SHRUBS, BUSHES, FENCES AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS SHALL BE RESTRICTED TO A 2'-0" (24") MAXIMUM HEIGHT, AND TREES MAINTAINED TO A CLEARANCE OF 7'-0" ABOVE GROUND (MIN).



CITY OF ST. HELENA

SCALE: NONE
DRAWN: TP
CHK: WA
APPVD: EAS

VISIBILITY AND FENCING REQUIREMENTS

APPROVED BY:

ERICA AHMANN-SMITHIES, P.E. C65468
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

DATE: JULY 2019

STD. NO.

324

Exhibit C

Vision Triangle Standards
(Napa, Healdsburg, Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Sonoma, Cotati)

City of Napa:

17.52.170

Vision Triangle at Driveways and Intersections. Fences, walls or dense planting in the form of hedges shall not exceed two feet in height when located in the *vision triangle* of a driveway or intersection (see Public Works Department standard specifications), however, fences that are at least 50% open shall be permitted up to three feet in height. Trees located in the *vision triangle* shall be maintained to provide a clearance of seven and one-half feet.

17.54.155

Visibility shall not be blocked between a height of two and seven and one-half feet within the vision triangle of a driveway crossing a street right-of-way line, except that fences that are at least 50% open shall be permitted up to three feet in height. The length/width of the triangle varies depending on the type of street: local street = 10 feet; collectors=15 feet; arterials=20 feet depending on the type of street.

10.32.020

Whenever the Traffic Engineer finds that any hedge, shrubbery, tree or fence or other obstruction, growing, erected or maintained in a parkway or on private property in the setback area obstructs the view of any driveway or intersection, or any traffic upon the streets approaching such driveway or intersection, he or she shall cause the hedge, shrubbery, tree, fence or other obstruction to be immediately removed or reduced in height. Such hazards may include any structure, fence, landscaping or other obstructions more than two feet in height above the level of the sidewalk or ground elevation, whichever is higher, in an area called a vision triangle as specified below, except that trees may be allowed when no foliage is closer to the ground than seven and one-half feet and fences that are at least 50% open shall be permitted up to three feet in height.

A. At street intersections, the boundaries of the vision triangle are formed by measuring along the curb-lines from the projected intersection a distance of **50 feet** and then connecting the two points with a straight line.

B. At driveway entrances, the boundaries of the vision triangle are formed by measuring along the side of the paved driveway and along the street right-of-way line from their intersection a distance as specified below and then connecting the two points with a straight line:

1. Not less than 10 feet for local streets;
2. Not less than 15 feet for collector streets;
3. Not less than 20 feet for arterial streets

20.16.100

A **vision triangle** shall be reserved at all driveways as a public safety feature. Within this area, no vegetation shall exceed a height of three feet, except for trees that are pruned and maintained so as not to block the visibility of vehicles entering and exiting sites. The design and extent of the **vision triangle** shall be approved by the planning and building director.

20.16.005(E)

Vision clearance, corner lots.

On corner lots, within a triangular area formed by the street property lines and a line connecting points on the street property lines **30 feet** from the street intersection, no fence, wall, hedge, or other obstruction, except the natural grade of a site, shall exceed a height of 30 inches above established grade at the edge of the existing or proposed pavement, provided that trees pruned up to eight feet above street grade shall be permitted.

F. Width, corner lots.

The minimum width of corner lots in an R or ORM district shall be 20 percent greater than the minimum width for the district as otherwise provided.

City of Healdsburg:

City of Santa Rosa

Within a vision triangle

36 inch maximum height, with nothing over 24 inches in the first five feet behind the curb line

NOTE: The boundaries of a vision triangle are formed by drawing lines from the point of intersection of a lot's street corner property lines to points 40 feet along the two property lines, and then connecting the two points with a straight line.

	20-30.110(F)	(a) Vision triangle boundaries are formed by: (1) drawing a 40-foot line along the face of curb or edge of one roadway to a point of intersection; (2) from the point of intersection, drawing a line 40 feet back along the face of curb or edge of the second roadway; and (3) connecting the end points of these two lines. Vision triangles at locations with all way stop controls or signalized intersections may be allowed less restrictive requirements with City Traffic Engineer approval. (b) Driveway vision triangle boundaries are formed by first drawing a 10-foot line along the back edge of the sidewalk from the driveway and then drawing a 10-foot line along the driveway edge abutting the sidewalk. Connecting these two legs completes the vision triangle.
City of Petaluma	13.020	Vision Triangle . The triangular area formed by the intersection of the extension of the curb lines and a line connecting them at points thirty-five (35) feet from the intersection of the extended curb lines. For driveways, the site visibility triangle is determined by the triangular area formed as shown in Figure 13.1. For driveways, the measurement is taken from the back of the sidewalk, or where there is no sidewalk as determined by the Director. https://petaluma.municipal.codes/ZoningOrds/13.020
City of Sonoma	Standard Plans	Sent a link to city standards in which I didn't find any info: https://www.sonomacity.org/documents/city-engineer-contract-position-provides-services-three-basic-areas-review-public-improvements-private-developments-streets-drains-water-lines-etc-capital-improvement-pr/ In the absense of a local standard plan, they use Caltrans standards.
City of Cotati	17.14.040	Fences, walls, hedges, and other structures or vegetation shall not exceed a height of three feet within a clear vision triangle and the lower portion of tree crowns shall not be less than eight feet within a clear vision triangle. Clear vision triangles shall be delineated as follows: A. Uncontrolled intersections: A triangular area bounded by the curb lines (tangents) and a diagonal line joining points on the tangents which are located thirty-five foot back from what would be the point of these curb lines' intersection. B. Controlled intersections: A triangle having twenty-five foot tangents at the curblines. C. Driveways: A triangle having twenty-five foot tangents at the outside line of the driveway and the curbline.



City of St. Helena Planning Commission September 2, 2025

**Project: ZOA 25-003 Visibility Triangle Standards
Amendment**

**Staff: Maya DeRosa, AICP, Community Development
Director**

Community Development Department

May 20, 2025



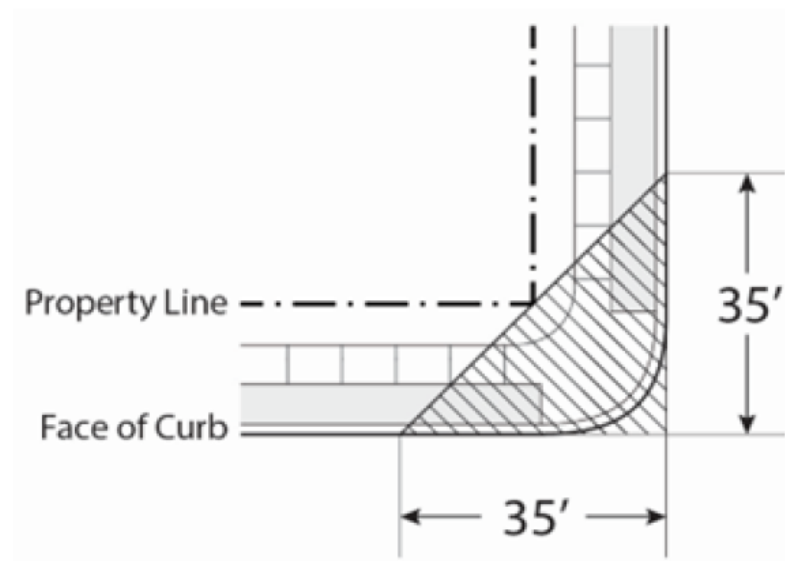
Background-Review of Planning Commission Discussion on May 20, 2025

Zoning Code has standards relating to vision triangles:

- Maximum height of vegetation, walls, fences inside triangle=2 feet
- Length and area within a vision triangle: 35 feet from street corner



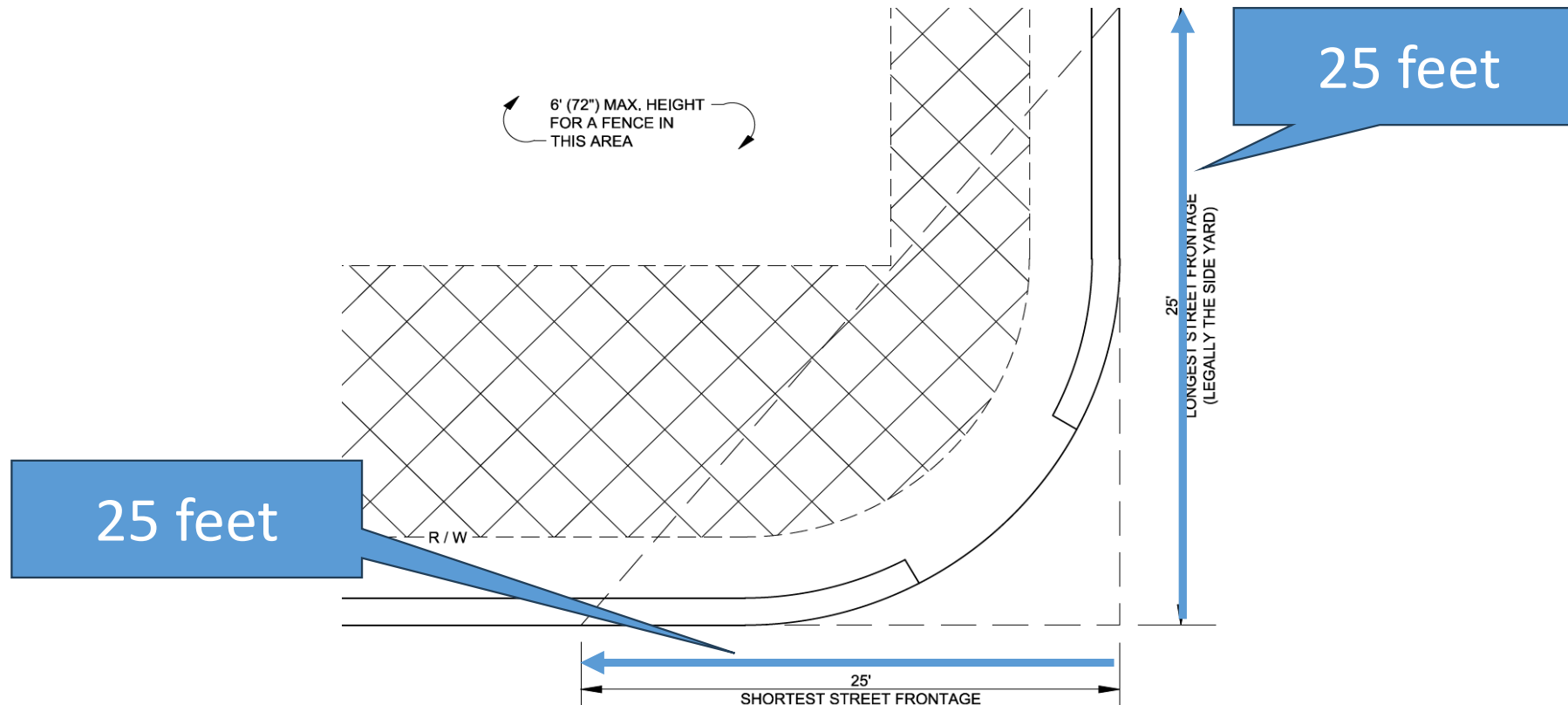
Figure 17.32(E). Visibility Triangle





Background

- Public Works has standard (No. 324) relating to vision triangles that allows for a 25 foot vision triangle





Background

- Reinspection in April 2025 noted number of properties out of compliance reduced to 26
- When applying the Public Works standard, the number out of compliance reduces to 2



Background

- 299 street corners surveyed by Fire Chief and Fire Inspector in Jan 2024
- 66 properties found to be out of compliance based on SHMC standard (35 feet and max 2 feet height)
- Summer 2024 City releases educational and awareness campaign to residents of vision triangle requirements

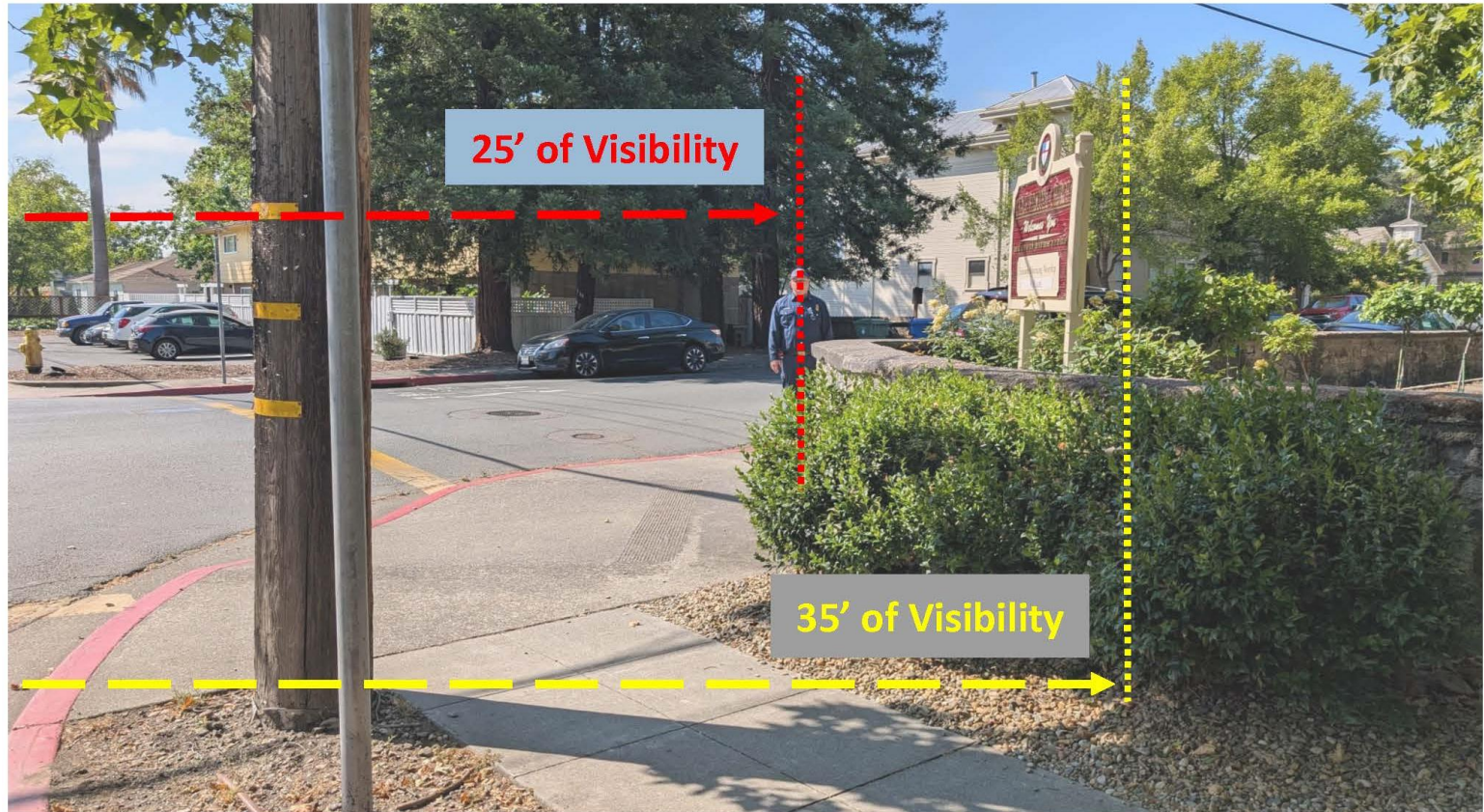




Field Research

Grace Episcopal Church on the corner of Oak and Spring.

Stone wall is in compliance at 25' of visibility and 42" wall/fence height.





Field Research/Historic Stone Walls

Enforcement of 35' of visibility and 24" maximum fence/wall height would require removal of a portion of this historic wall.





Field Research

1702 Madrona—Stone wall is 36" tall. In compliance for 25' Visibility and 42" fence/wall height. Enforcement of 35' visibility and 24" fence/wall height would require removal.





Feedback from Planning Commission Discussion May 20, 2025

Generally Supported:

- Increasing the allowable height of vegetation/ fences from 24" to a maximum of 42"
- Reducing the length of a vision triangle from 35 feet to 25 feet





Recommended Redline Changes:

Subsection B (1) of Section 17.24.050 of the St. Helena Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

Fences, hedges, or dense planting in the form of a hedge shall not exceed ~~two feet~~ forty-two inches in height when located in the visibility triangle as defined in Part V, Definitions and Rules of Measurement.



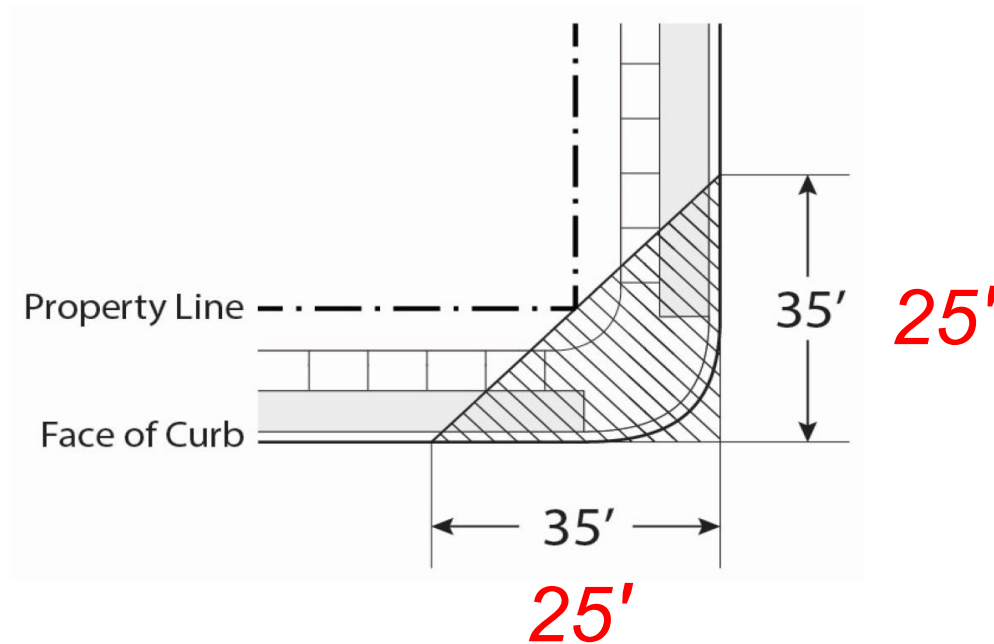
Recommended Redline Changes:

Chapter 17.32, Definition of Terms, Visibility Triangle

Visibility triangle. On a corner lot, the triangle formed by lines extended from the face of the curb to their intersection and a line connecting the face of the curb extensions measured twenty five (25) ~~35~~ feet from their point of intersection. If no curb exists, the edge of the roadway or vehicular travel area shall be used as the point of measurement.



Recommended Redline Changes: Figure 17.32 (E)

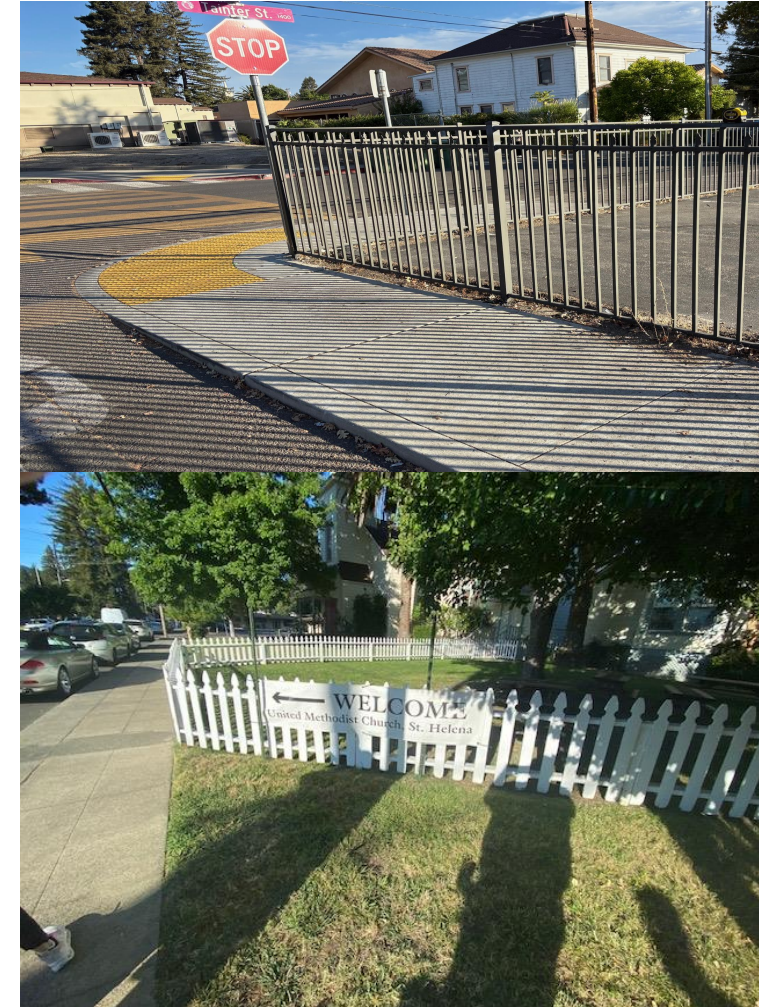




Additional Considerations for Discussion:

Consider codifying exemptions for:

- Non-conforming historic stone walls on properties listed on the National, State or Local Register (HP Overlay)
- Fences that are open 50% or more within a visibility triangle with posts that do not exceed maximum allowable height in vision triangle





Recommendation

Recommend that the Planning Commission adopt the attached resolution recommending that the City Council:

- 1) Find that, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3) the project is Exempt; and
- 2) Adopt an ordinance amending Sections 17.24.050 B (1) and 17.32, Definition of Terms, Visibility Triangle, of Title 17 of the St. Helena Municipal Code (ZOA 25-003).



Questions?

