

# City of Calabasas Story Pole Procedures

Effective June 25, 2015

## Purpose

Story poles are used to depict the silhouette of a proposed structure or an addition to an existing building. Story poles are intended to help decision makers, staff, neighbors and other interested parties visualize the location, mass and/or height of a proposed building(s), as part of the review of the project's relationship to its surroundings. In addition to story poles, the City may also require other visual aids, such as photo simulations, models or renderings, to assist in illustrating the proposed final project.

## Applicability

Unless determined otherwise by the Community Development Director or his/her designee, story poles shall be required to be installed for projects that are to be reviewed by the Planning Commission as follows:

- 1) All new projects and those with additions of 500s.f. or more on properties located within the Old Topanga, Calabasas Highlands and Scenic Corridor Overlay Zones, or on a designated significant ridgeline.
- 2) All new freestanding commercial and multi-family residential projects throughout the City
- 3) All projects seeking an exception (increase) in building height by way of variance or development plan.

## Duration

Story poles shall be erected at least four weeks prior to the Planning Commission hearing date and shall remain in place until such time the Planning Commission has rendered a final decision on the project. Story poles shall remain in place during the appeal period and through the appeal process. Following the final decision, the story poles shall be removed as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours following the decision date. If at any time the story poles become unsafe, they shall be repaired or removed immediately. If any poles fall down prior to the hearing date, they shall be promptly replaced.

### **Plan Components**

A story pole plan must be submitted to staff for approval prior to installation. The story pole location must be plotted on the roof plan and each location should indicate the maximum height of the pole. Applicants shall confer with City staff for precise pole locations for unusually shaped structures. The plan should also include the contact information and license number for the licensed contractor, license surveyor, and licensed architect or licensed civil engineer installing the story poles.

### **Construction Method and Materials**

Story poles shall be made of standard 2"x 4" lumber or similar material that is sturdy and avoids bending as determined by the City. All story poles need to be erected safely and without putting the public at risk, without bending or leaning, so as to withstand weather. This can be accomplished by installing guy wires or other similar temporary support system. Colored ribbons or construction netting not larger than 3 feet wide shall be attached between poles to detail roof lines.

### **Pole Locations**

Story poles shall be erected at the most distant corners of the proposed structure or addition and at the maximum height of the roof ridge. The idea is to achieve a silhouette of the structure or addition, clearly defining the maximum roof heights. The tallest story pole shall be painted with a clearly visible black paint at every one (1) foot increment. (Story poles for roof overhangs, eaves, chimneys, balconies and accessory buildings may also be required at the discretion of the Community Development Director).

### **Certification**

Story pole heights and locations must be certified in writing by a licensed surveyor, licensed contractor, licensed architect or licensed civil engineer and such certification shall be provided, along with the story pole plan, to the project planner a minimum of three weeks in advance of the hearing date. The height of each pole should be clearly marked on the base of each pole.

### **Story Pole Determination**

The Director shall evaluate the following factors in their determination of whether or not a site is suitable for story poles. These factors shall include:

- a) Safety, such as the presence of power lines, public right of ways, pedestrians, access and other security and welfare concerns;
- b) Stability, such as the structure height, materials, weather, anchoring or topographic conditions;
- c) Inaccurate depiction of the proposed project due to land modifications, grading or other site conditions;
- d) Impacts to trees, habitat, archeologic or biologic resources, or the need for land alterations in pole placement;
- e) Site constraints, such as roadway re-alignments, utilities, easements and fire access requirements.
- f) Excessive cost or financial impact.

The Director may also seek advice from the Architectural Review Panel and/or a professional story pole installer in arriving at a determination of pole installation feasibility.

### **Planning Commission Review**

If the Community Development Director finds that at least 50% of the project mass may or should not be depicted with story poles, a report stating the basis of the Director's recommendation shall be submitted to the Planning Commission for their review and decision. The recommendation should identify all factors which limit the feasibility of story pole placement on the subject site. In such cases, the Planning Commission shall make the final decision on the extent of story poles to be erected. The Planning Commission shall also be the body to determine if story poles should be re-established in instances when vandalism to the poles has occurred.

### **Notification**

For commercial projects, the applicant shall erect a sign on-site displaying a rendering or photo simulation of the proposed project at the time that the story poles are installed. The sign shall include contact information for the City's case planner, and if applicable, any web site information prepared by the City and/or applicant.

For commercial projects where less than 100% of the project is depicted with story poles, the rendering should be overlaid with the location of the story poles that have been erected. The overlay is intended to assist the public and decision makers as to the relationship of the poles and the proposed project.

Any required City notices of a public hearing on a project shall also identify that story poles have been installed. For commercial projects, the notice should also include a project rendering or photo simulation.

The Planning Commission and the City Council shall be notified at the time that story poles are erected on the site.