

## STORY POLES

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### BACKGROUND

At the February 27, 2008 meeting SunPAC members requested information about Story Poles and suggested guidelines be developed for Story Poles in Summerland.

Story Poles serve as a visual depiction of proposed development projects, allowing the review authorities and the public an opportunity to evaluate the visual effects the intended project will have on the surrounding environment. Story Poles are placed at a project site in the location of future construction. They are generally constructed of a sturdy material and located to denote the extremities of a proposed project. Often, orange construction netting is used to denote the ridgeline and eaves of the proposed project, which illustrates the mass, bulk, and scale of the project. The timing and requirement of story poles varies from jurisdiction and ranges from prior to review and approval by a BAR or PC to the appeal of a project. Key points when considering story poles are:

- When to require the construction of story poles;
- The types of materials used;
- Location and measurement of the story poles; and
- Certification and documentation of the story poles.

The Santa Barbara County Process Improvement Oversight Committee is currently in the process of developing guidelines for Story Poles. This Committee is comprised of county staff, Board of Supervisors representatives and the public. These guidelines are expected to be finalized in spring or summer 2008. The Story Pole guidelines will serve as a separate policy document covering the entire County, and therefore will not be included in the Draft Commercial Design Guidelines for Summerland.

For informational purposes, Staff has included a copy of the Applicant's Guide to Story Poles from the City of Del Mar, CA as an example of the types of guidelines other jurisdictions have already developed. The County of Santa Barbara's guidelines on Story Poles are expected to draw heavily from other jurisdictions.



## ***STORY POLES***

### ***An applicant's guide to the process***

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*The following information is intended to provide information on the City of Del Mar's process for story poles. Please contact the Planning Department to obtain any additional information.*

#### **PURPOSE**

Story poles are used to depict the elevations and silhouette of a proposed structure or an addition to an existing building. They are intended to aid neighbors, staff personnel, and members of the decision-making bodies in their evaluation of a project application. Story poles are required for projects that involve a new structure, a second-story addition to an existing structure, or any addition which, in the estimation of staff or the Design Review Board, may cause concerns about inappropriate bulk and mass, or view blockage. Story poles are also required for projects located in the Open Space Overlay Zone. In the event that required story poles are not erected or are incorrectly installed, an application may be continued from its scheduled hearing date to a subsequent meeting so that the story pole requirements can be fully met.

#### **PROCESS**

##### Step 1 - Story pole installation

Story poles shall be erected at least fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing date, and shall remain in place until the Design Review Board (or Planning Commission, as applicable) has taken action and the appeal period has expired. Staff recommends that the poles be made of 2" x 4" lumber with brightly-colored ribbon and/or twine strung between them to show roof lines. The attached sketch illustrates a typical story pole installation. Wooden posts are shown erected at all corners of the proposed addition and at roof ridges. Again, their purpose is to show the structure's outline and roof and deck height elevations.

While the story poles are not required to depict eave overhangs, balcony railings, or chimneys, they are recommended in cases where such improvements would likely be the source of concern by members of the public or the DRB. In fact, where such aspects of a proposal are of concern, the hearing body may continue the item to a subsequent meeting and direct the applicant to place additional story poles. Staff can assist applicants in determining any special story pole considerations for a project.

##### Step 2 - Story pole plan submittal

Within five (5) days after the poles are erected, eight (8) copies of a story pole plan must be submitted to staff. The plan is usually based on the roof plan for the project with the following additional information provided:

**A. Story Pole Site Plan**

The dimensioned location of the story poles in relation to lot lines and the proposed development, as well as the height of each pole. Story pole site plans shall be at least 1/8"=1' scale. (See Example 1)

**B. Story Pole Matrix**

As with other aspects of project plans, the roof height elevations on story pole plans should be tied to a City of Del Mar benchmark and include a project matrix worksheet. (See Example 2)

The Project Matrix should include: a) the base of the pole elevation; b) the planned elevation; c) the pole length; and d) a description of where the story pole is located.

**C. Signed Statement**

A signed statement by a licensed engineer or surveyor (not the project architect) on the story pole site plan; stating that the location and height of the poles is true and accurate.

Step 3 - Removal of story poles Story poles shall be removed within seven (7) calendar days after the ten-day DRB appeal period expires or within seven (7) calendar days after the final appeal and hearing. Story poles associated with a formal application, which has been inactive for three (3) months, shall be removed until the application review returns to an "active" status. Informal story poles may be placed as part of a pre-application "evaluation phase", however, they may be in place for only a maximum of 30 days.

# STORY POLE ILLUSTRATION



