

Community Comments Received as of 7/16/2016

Below are comments received from the community based on their review of the 2026 Somerset View Guidelines Working Draft 1 for Community Input, dated June 6, 2026. The input received was arranged into the categories below to inform the analysis of the comments.

Expectations

- First and foremost, I want to keep the view that my wife and I fell in love with and made us decide to buy in Somerset. The view is gorgeous, and our family loves it year-round.
- I would hope that city/mountain AND tree/water views will count as protected.
- I'd like confidence that the view I bought is the view I'll continue to enjoy.
- The maximum height for each lot has already been determined, let's keep it that way... When people buy a house in Somerset, they should know the view they purchase is the view they get. This also tells perspective buyers the limit of future remodels.
- My primary goal is to have confidence that the view I purchased with my home is the view I can continue to enjoy without ongoing uncertainty.

What is a view

- I also want the original territorial views protected with language that is easy to understand by (i) homeowners, (ii) the CRC, and (iii) potential future Somerset property purchasers.
- The *View* that this Guideline is intended to preserve is the *View* that is observable from the *Observation Zone* at the time the original *house* was built.
- A *protected view* includes one of the identified *qualifying elements*
- 4) View definition: It's important to keep the spirit of considering the most expansive definition of a view. If something was viewable originally from any place on my property, why suddenly is that thing or perspective no longer valuable?
- I'd like the view to be the view. It's the whole view, not piecemeals or sections or certain elements.
- Use this definition of Territorial View and delete Territorial Appendix:
A territorial view is generally defined as a broad, scenic perspective of the surrounding local landscape, generally comprising of rolling hills, valleys, or forested areas, rather than a specific, high-demand landmark like an ocean, lake, or mountain. It can also include a wide-angle look over a residential area, often from an elevated position. For the purposes of these guidelines a protected territorial view is the area above a view line for a view that includes a qualifying element.

Where to observe a view

- The *Observation Zone* is from a horizontal line that are 4' 7" from the floor, along the entire opening of a window or glass door when measured 2' back from the inside of the window or door. **Delete upper limit of Observation Zone 5' 10"**.
- **View** is defined as the *View* or *Views* from the **Observation Zone** at the time the house was originally built. Replace Living space with 'house'.
- All views from public areas (living room, kitchen, dining areas, what am I forgetting?) should be protected above the eave roofline and fence tops. Period. Easy.
- The way it was when this place was built.
- 2) A different take on Living Space and Observation Zones: There should be no assumption regarding the vantage point from which a view is considered impaired. We have an obvious view from our second story deck, living room, etc. that would be

protected in the guidelines and consistent with our family's traditional understanding of the constraints. We also have wonderful views from our FIRST story bedroom, family room, garage, yard, ground-level deck, and driveway. We don't want to lose the "easement" of view from those areas because now there is some document that limits the vantage points to the upper floor or special viewing locations. I am often in my garage working hobbies and enjoy the view from that space, not to mention the family room and downstairs bedroom. We consider our garage, driveway and front yard non-transitory spaces.

- 3) Deck Views: Views from decks should not be considered "transitory". This might become an issue with newly built decks. Something to think about. But our deck is certainly a primary viewing area and original construction. I would also argue that our front yard is a primary viewing area along with the bedroom and family room on the first floor that looks across that yard.
- **External Decks** – The views from **original** external decks must be protected. Hence the importance of item 5 above.
- 6) Affected Neighbor: I think this paragraph addresses my point #1 above. However, my idea of living space is more generous - my points #2 and #4.
- The covenants for my Division are silent on "**Observation Zone**" and "**Living Space**". How were these terms get incorporated in past View Guidelines? Were these terms approved by the covenant owners?
- Highland No.2 covenants do not limit the location and basis for observable views. Thus, shouldn't the views from bedrooms also be protected?

View line

- Between adjacent roofs it dips down to a minimum height of five feet. If roof tops can be seen beyond the immediate roof tops the view line may be elevated to the height of roofs up to three rows away. Viewlines may be taken from any window on the floor containing the living room.
- Without overriding considerations, the maximum elevation of the structure on a given lot will establish the maximum elevation of any future buildings.
- For *protected views* the *View Line* is used to define unnecessary view infringement for both vegetation growth and new construction.
- View Line – simply put, it is the roof/ fence ridge line, that if moved up, would impede a protected view (pun intended).
- 5) View Line: This definition will be crucial. It may not be simply the house across the street or across the backyard. We live on a fairly steep part of the hill so this is likely not an issue for us. But, on a less steep portion of our hill the geometry of an eye 4'7" above the ground can provide a view of a feature miles away (like the lake or mountains) that could be affected by a modification to a house a block or two away - in addition to the house most adjacent to the affected house. So, the review process of a remodel should include more than just the adjacent homes. In our case we can see the roofs of houses a few blocks below us. If those roofs were to move higher our view would be affected. This goes to the matter of what features of my view should be preserved. Enumerating all of the items that are considered "view worthy" is not possible. So, the rule should be simple. Never go above the original roof line for any house in Somerset because it undoubtedly affects someone's view of something that they consider "view worthy". The graphic in Figure 3.1 is critical and consistent with our understanding of the view line. Don't assume only adjacent houses are affected. And, don't assume what I consider important is not important in terms of something I enjoy observing.
- As for properties, adding on / going up – think of the view line for others around you. And the entire design of our Somerset Community. Homes were designed to support views up the entire hill.
- Our home has been in our family since it was built in 1969. The "View Line" has always been understood to be that connecting the original rooflines. This View Line was always considered the upper limit of any remodel.

- Vegetation issues have always been solved easily and in a friendly manner with our neighbors. However, the 20' limit seems like room for confusion - see below.
- I have attached a couple of photos. Here are some comments to go along with the photos. The first photo is from our second story deck. The second photo is from our garage. These comments apply to both photos (vantage points):
 - We consider the view everything above the roof lines to be important. Any change in elevation of those original roof lines would take away from our view. It should not matter what the thing is we're looking at or where precisely we are viewing from.
 - It's clear that the area between the houses is blocked slightly with vegetation. We have a good relationship with our neighbors who take care of these trees when reminded to do so. The graphic in Appendix 3 regarding the view line between houses is a proper representation of what the expectation should be. That would be a nice example to share with neighbors when a vegetation concern comes up.
- 7) Trees: There is a problem with 20'. If my neighbor just across the street let her trees at the street grow to 20' my view would be blocked. It needs to be clear that trees cannot go above any sight line that the original structure provides regardless of what a tree height is. 20' should be maximum. But there will certainly be situations where that limit will be much lower. Perhaps the covenant already achieves this and I don't realize it. But a better explanation for this would be beneficial.
- Regarding views and trees: Only the couple dozen or so "original old growth trees" that were left by the original builders may be excluded from blocking views. All other vegetation that was planted after the Somerset Community building process was started should be pruned in such a way as to not block territorial views.
- In our 1962 covenant for Division 8, in section 4, first paragraph, it says that "The maximum height of any residence shall be established by the Building Committee prior to starting construction." Therefore we should assume that each house was most likely built as high as possible to maximize their view as allowed by the "Original Building Committee".

Ridgeline

- Lastly, while stuck in traffic near the I-405/I-90 interchange looking upward at Somerset and also while walking at street level with my family in Somerset, we have noticed how much we enjoy the smooth visual contours of the overall neighborhood design. House roofs and ridgelines flow smoothly, giving Somerset a consistent, relaxing, family-friendly character and charm.
- Ridgeline: The continuous, visually perceived crest of a ridge or hillside, whether formed by the natural terrain alone or by the combined appearance of the terrain and structures upon it. Protecting a ridgeline means preserving its smooth, harmonious profile when viewed from surrounding properties and public viewpoints.
- The CRC must take Ridgelines into consideration when evaluating an effect or impairment on a view.
- They will also provide a reasonable, consistent, and transparent process for applying the Somerset Covenants **as they relate to views and ridgelines**.
- Ridgeline – is a critical factor in establishing the lower bound of a view line. Thus, the CRC has an **obligation** to include it when evaluating impact on a view.
- The rooflines were set at very specific elevations in relation to all the other buildings. People who bought early all understood this. You can't raise your roofline without permission from all the other residences who you would be affecting.
- In the creation of Somerset the original building committee made a substantial effort to preserve "the views". We can see that the rooflines carefully flow and taper gradually to

frame the territory views. We must honor the "Original Building Committee" they knew what they were doing, they were the original artists.

Value of the View

- We moved here because of the view and value it highly.
- Clear guidelines that leave very little (if any) room for interpretation. I liked the clarity of the images that have been circulating with the different colored lines for city, territorial, etc.
- Views are the key differentiator for Somerset and it's vital we do everything possible to preserve ours.
- We all agree that the "Views" provided at each home are a primary source of its value, but not just monetary.

Know and Respect the Covenants

- I believe homeowners should understand and accept the neighborhood covenants when purchasing a home. Buyers shouldn't purchase with the expectation that they can later work around, reinterpret, or manipulate those standards for their own benefit at the expense of neighboring properties.
- More broadly, I chose to buy in this neighborhood with the understanding that these rules were part of the community. I think it's reasonable for all homeowners—current and future—to have the same expectation and to respect those standards rather than seek ways around them.

Hopes

- I hope the revised guidelines establish objective, consistent standards that protect ridgelines, preserve views, and ultimately support property values. Clear rules that everyone understands and follows will benefit the entire community.
- I also hope the process can remove as much politics and subjectivity as possible. It's disappointing to hear how divisive some of these situations have become, and I'd like to see guidelines that reduce conflict rather than create it.
- The rooftop section specifies guidelines for color and material. I recommend adding some guidelines on what should not be placed on roofs. For example, some solar panel installations place metal pipes and wires on the roof. This type of installation is unsightly for neighbors whose views overlook the industrial looking rooftop. Aesthetically pleasing installations would place these pipes and wires in the attic or under the eaves.

Statements

- Second, as a firsthand witness of a "CRC approved" building plan that will clearly block existing views
- The CRC must take into consideration: maintenance of the community plan.
- was uniquely designed "up the hill" to maximize amazing views for all (at least for a good many). And while we appreciate trees have grown, we would hope that Somerset maintains the opportunity for the value of views for all.
- As good homeowners, trim your trees to below rooftop – think about neighbors above and around you. Self-maintenance should be a polite expectation of every home owner.
- I think it's important for our community to have clear guidelines to avoid the type of disagreements I've heard are happening in the neighborhood.
- 1) Cross division CRC considerations: Our house (4416 138th AVE SE) is at the border of division 4. It's possible that a home in division 3 could potentially affect our view. Therefore, it's important that the guidelines be clear that one division can affect another. A remodel being considered in one division needs to inquire beyond that division for view impairment. I suspect this is covered. But, is it possible that a division can go rogue and unanimously change their covenants and affect our view in a different division?
- The idea of a set of documents is a good one. Possibly three:
 - 1) View Guideline: Short understandable that fills the bill of simple sensible, easily understood, supported and used by the community to protect the original community

plan.2) Remodel and Construction Guidelines: detailed guide and references for all external characteristics. 3) History: Gives background information and rationale for the other two documents.

- The "right to refuse" "any design" "for any reason" sounds too arbitrary. Refusal always has to be grounded based on written rules and covenants.
- The homes and neighborhoods of Somerset were approved as built and existing views should be protected. If there is to be an exception process, any view change should be subject to approval by the impacted homeowner(s). Somerset has already been developed; it does not need redeveloping. I had assumed that covenants were for view protection.
- My territorial view and privacy have both been reduced and impacted over my objections by the CRC/SCA. The process didn't work for me.
- I support the view guidelines work of Charles Boffording; the division 8 amendments were well intended regardless of the execution details.
- The covenant is owned by the homeowners of that division.

Questions Posed

- If a change/ remodel/ rebuild request is made, if the doors and windows are moved, how will the CRC ensure "View Protection"? On what basis, since only the original views appear to have been protected. – *remember that "protection" provided to one homeowner could be seen as impairment to the neighbors and vice-versa.*
- Has the time come for the SCA to stand up a Committee, commissioned to look for past ACC and CRC cases and decisions for all the Divisions? For:
 - Historical records; Consistency on past ACC/ CRC decisions; Gaps in ACC performance; Lessons learned Transparency; Other?
- View Impairment and Consistency -- this issue is at the heart of purpose of the guidelines and appear tricky:
 - How will the "views" of remodeled/ rebuilt homes be protected?
- **Observation Zone** – well crafted, but what is its provenance? As previously stated, my division covenant is silent on this.
- **New View Created from Remodeling** – how will this be enforced in the future? Hence the necessity for the CRC, and required by the SCA Secretary, to create and maintain applicable records.