

SOMERSET ESTATES HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Maximizing Home Values, Quality of Life, Positioning as Premier Community

What's Up #21: February 1, 2019

Standards Revision Update

Our Somerset Estates Homeowners Association is close to reaching its first anniversary. Thanks to the hard work and cooperation among homeowners and the board, much has been accomplished to establish a functional homeowner association. Among the many steps taken this year, we established the following strategic objectives: Maximizing Home Values, Quality of Life and Positioning Somerset Estates as a Premier Front Range Community.

Revising and updating our community's Architectural and Landscaping Standards is an important initiative that will help our community make progress toward our goals. The Architectural Control Committee (ACC) has been working hard to gather input and formulate updated Standards.

This is the first Standards review as a separate 89 home community and the first opportunity to take a fresh look at Standards in the context of our newly adopted 2018 Declaration. After a careful and lengthy review, several major issues emerged:

The language and format of the SHOA Standards we have used for the past year are focused on new construction and need to reflect the maturity of our community;

A proactive approach is needed to identify and address lapses in community maintenance;

A reasonable approach is needed to protect our valuable mountain views;

Now is a good time to resolve ambiguities about responsibility for fence upkeep;
and,

Steps should be taken to maintain and enhance easements around the street monuments.

As a next step, the ACC will distribute an information package via mail to your home address in the next few days. It will contain descriptive information about the process underway, a copy of the proposed Standards and a survey. We hope you will take the time to review the materials and share your thoughts through the survey and/or by attending the upcoming February 12th meeting (see website for details). After receiving your input, the ACC will make final revisions to the Standards, and the Executive Board will vote to adopt them at the February 26th board meeting, also open to homeowners.

Our deepest thanks to the ACC for their diligent work on this important project. We believe developing and applying updated Standards will help improve our community.

MOUNTAIN VIEWS

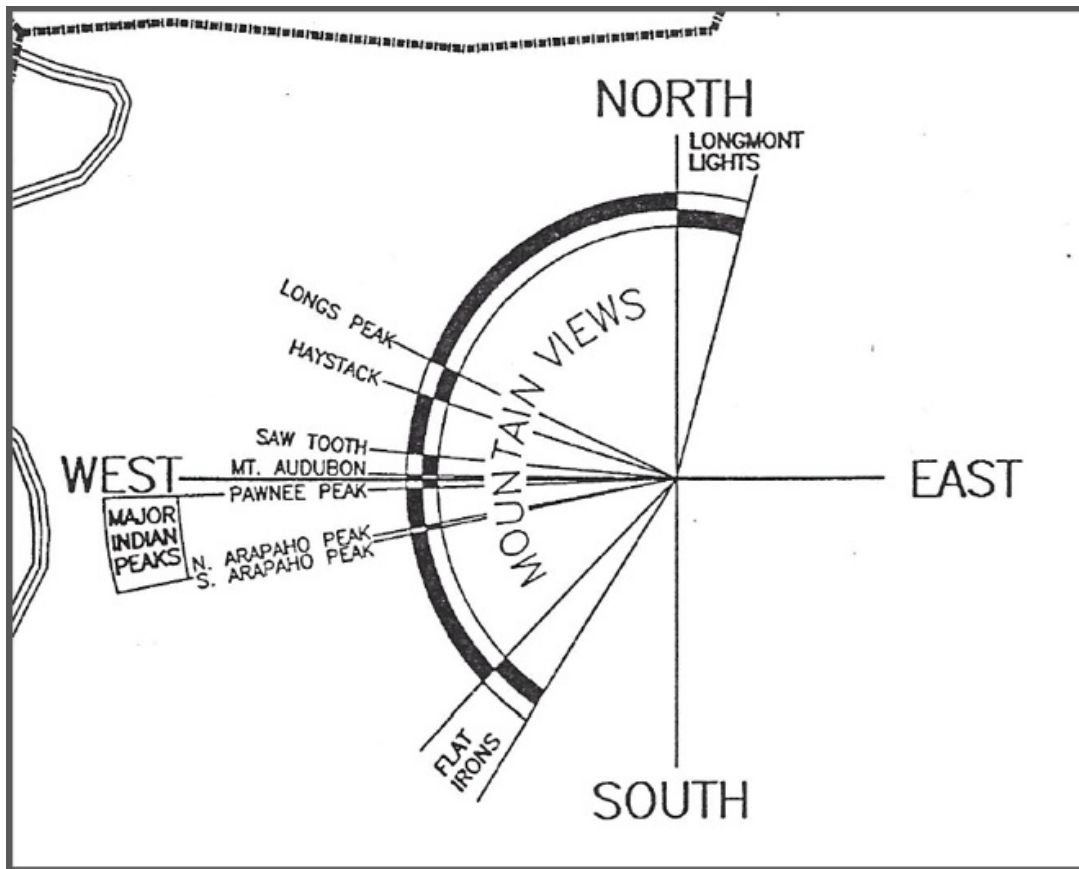
The presence of mountain views has been central to Somerset Estates' look and feel since the beginning. Excerpts from the original marketing materials include:

“At the foot of the Front Range of the Colorado Rocky Mountains, Niwot looks up daily to an ever changing panorama of snowy mountain peaks sharpened by the clear air which invigorates the community.”

“[The subdivision provides] homeowners with spectacular sight lines across the Boulder and St. Vrain Valleys to the Front Range, and to the Continental Divide and beyond.”

“[Somerset Place and Somerset Heights have breathtaking mountain views, but] what remains is the best of the best – Somerset Estates, sited on the promontory of the property... In Estates, nothing interferes, nothing obstructs. The pristine vistas stretch from Long's Peak north of the community to Pike's Peak, easily visible to the south.”

Subdivision maps and individual lot diagrams included the following legend depicting the specific extent of protected mountain views:



Early subdivision documents are replete with references to the importance of protecting mountain views, and early lot buyers were assured the HOA would restrict building and landscaping plans that threatened to block protected views. Documents from those early years said homeowners would be required to remove blocking vegetation and the HOA even had the authority, if needed, to enter properties to trim or remove landscaping and bill the owner for its expenses. (The current HOA/ACC does not intend to employ this method of enforcement.)

Have the intervening decades reduced the importance of mountain views? No. Realtors and appraisers agree homes in Somerset Estates derive approximately 10% of their value from the presence and extent of their mountain views. In fact, a recent appraisal put a value of \$400,000 on one home's views. Just as importantly, valuations are strongly influenced by comparable values of nearby homes. So, each of us benefit from our neighbors' higher home values. Put another way, *unconstrained growth of tall trees will eventually reduce the aggregate value of our community by more than \$10 million!*

Over the years, successive boards and their respective ACC's continued to pay close attention to reviewing plans for new home construction, landscaping and additions with an eye to preserving the original vision of the community. As vegetation and trees grow year-by-year, however, we have not had a clear and

effective method to protect this valuable asset.

With the foregoing in mind, the SEHOA board and ACC believe our community will benefit from a reasonable approach to protecting and restoring protected mountain view corridors. We have carefully considered a range of options available and have arrived at an approach that encourages neighborly cooperation and, we believe, will produce positive results. Look to the information coming soon by mail for more details.

We are hopeful that recognition and appreciation of how much we are “all in the same boat” will result in a friendly and effective process. Your attention to the proposed Standards and survey will help us address this important issue.

Upcoming Events at a Glance

Feb 12, 7:30pm - Regular Board Meeting at Firehouse (Discuss Standards)

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Feb 22, 10:30am - Book Club at Hemenway House

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Feb 26, 7:30pm - Regular Board Meeting at Firehouse (Approve Standards)

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Mar 19, 7:00pm - SEHOA Annual Homeowner Meeting at Niwot High

(These dates are subject to change, please check website for change notices.)

Contact SEHOA

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Anonymous Survey

Go ahead... tell us what you really think!

[Click to send an anonymous message to the board](#)

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