TOWN OF LOS GATOS

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: 11/17/2026

ITEM NO: 7

DATE: November 12, 2026

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Chris Constantin, Town Manager

SUBJECT: **Consider Approval to Add a Full-Time Senior Planner Position to the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget and Approve an Expenditure Budget Adjustment of $176,550 for the Position from the Community Development Operating Budget**

RECOMMENDATION: Authorize the Town Manager to add a full-time Senior Planner position to the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget and approve an expenditure budget appropriation adjustment of $176,550 for the position from the Community Development Operating Budget.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Approval of the proposed action will add one full-time Senior Planner position to the Community Development Department. The estimated cost for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2026-27 is $176,550, which requires a corresponding expenditure budget adjustment. Funding is expected to be supported primarily through Community Development fee revenue. To the extent fee revenue is insufficient, the remaining costs would be funded through available General Fund resources. Ongoing annual costs for the position will be evaluated and incorporated as part of future annual budget adoption processes.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

The item relates to the strategic priority to preserve the Town's small-town charm and provide a range of housing opportunities and historic neighborhoods, while diligently maintaining and implementing the Housing Element.

PREPARED BY: Cheryl Parkman
Human Resources Director

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Administrative Services Director

SUBJECT: Consideration and Approval to Add a Full-Time Senior Planner Position to the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget and Approve an Expenditure Budget Adjustment of $176,550 for the Position from the Community Development Operating Budget.
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BACKGROUND:

The Housing Element is the Town's strategic plan for housing the Town's present and future residents. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65588.5, jurisdictions are required to adopt a Housing Element that is in substantial compliance with State Housing Element law every eight (8) years. The next Housing Element will need to be approved by Town Council by January 2031 for the time period of 2031-2039. Planning for the Seventh Cycle Housing Element will need to commence soon to ensure adoption before the deadline. The addition of this position is intended to support capacity within the Planning Division to begin efforts early.

The Town also has long-range planning needs for the 2040 General Plan related to land use, commercial development, open space, and community design. These are focused areas to strategically manage development in the Town.

DISCUSSION:

Adoption and certification of the Housing Element before the state mandated deadline is a critical need for the Town to avoid consequences imposed by the courts and the California Department of Housing and Community Development. Additionally, there are aspects of the Housing Element that may require Town Municipal Code changes, public comment and participation, and multiple Council meetings before adoption.

The Community Development Department does not currently have a Senior Planner with a sole focus on long-range planning needs. With the addition of a Senior Planner in CDD, this staff member can begin working on the Seventh Cycle Housing Element that will need to be adopted and certified by January 2031. The Senior Planner will also be focused on strategically implementing the General Plan and updating the Plan and Municipal Codes, as needed. Additionally, the Senior Planner will be focused on monitoring legislation that necessitates updates to Town regulations. The substantial amount of time required to ensure conformity to state law, Town regulations, and stakeholder communication necessitates a full-time employee.

Community Development Department staff balance current planning functions, permit processing, development review, Housing Element implementation, Municipal Code updates, and General Plan implementation activities. Existing staffing resources are fully allocated to ongoing operational responsibilities and do not provide sufficient capacity for the extensive long-range planning efforts required for preparation of the Seventh Cycle Housing Element, implementation of the General Plan, and responsiveness to evolving State housing and land use legislation. The addition of a dedicated Senior Planner will allow the Town to proactively address these long-range planning obligations while maintaining existing service levels for development review and permit processing.

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CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that Town Council approve the addition of a full-time Senior Planner position to the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget and approve an expenditure budget adjustment of $176,550 for the position from the Community Development Operating Budget.

COORDINATION:

This memo was coordinated with the Town Manager, Town Attorney and Community Development Director.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.