



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
GENERAL PLAN COMMITTEE
REPORT**

**DRAFT
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 14, 2025**

The General Plan Committee of the Town of Los Gatos conducted a meeting on May 14, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Ryan Rosenberg, Vice Chair Emily Thomas, Council Member Maria Ristow, Commissioner Jeffrey Barnett, Commissioner Rob Stump, Committee Member Bent Jensen, and Committee Member Rasha Lashin.

Absent: Council Member Rob Rennie, Committee Member Chris Ray.

VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

CONSENT ITEMS (TO BE ACTED UPON BY A SINGLE MOTION)

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2025.

MOTION: **Motion by Council Member Ristow to Approve Consent Item. Seconded by Commissioner Barnett.**

VOTE: **Motion passes (5-0-2), with Committee Members Jensen and Lashin abstaining.**

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. Consider Making a Recommendation to the Planning Commission to Approve the Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map Resolution and Ordinance to Comply with State Government Code Section 51178 and Amend the General Plan to Incorporate the Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Adoption of this Resolution and Ordinance is Exempt Pursuant to CEQA, Section 15268, in that it is Required by the State. General Plan Amendment Application GP-25-01 and Town Code Amendment A-25-03. Project Location: Town Wide. Applicant: Town of Los Gatos.

Robert Gray, Chief Building Official, presented the staff report.

Committee Members asked Staff questions.

Robert Gray

In general, the map hasn't changed significantly. We plan to have a comparative map for future meetings for viewing.

Joel Paulson

Currently, with the General Plan, we are requesting to replace the old FHSZ map with this new one as required by the State.

Opened Public Comment.

Carin Yamamoto

Is this map based on the conditions, or environment right now in Los Gatos, or is it a general map based on year-round changes?

Chair Rosenberg

We don't typically answer questions during public comments, but will ask staff to respond as it is a good question.

Robert Gray

The new map is made up of 29 years' worth of fire history and growth data. It is also set up based on the worst-case scenario. It considers the driest conditions and overgrowth in areas.

Brad Fox, Santa Clara County Fire

In addition to what Robert said, one of the major changes in the modeling from 2008 to the current modeling is in 2008, the state utilized a state database for weather conditions, whereas today, we are using remote automatic weather stations. That was a driver of the differences being proposed.

Closed Public Comment.

Committee Members discussed the matter.

Robert Gray

The original map showed everything as very high fire danger. The changes shown on the revised map have the Town broken up into three zones now: moderate; high; and very high severity zones.

Robert Gray

This year is a Code adoption year. This map adoption will coincide with Code changes to be proposed this year.

Robert Gray

This revised map is a more granular view of the hazards, and no changes are happening around zoning of the town.

Joel Paulson

We can work with County Fire to see if CalFire already has descriptions for the zones to be available to incorporate online and within the General Plan. CalFire has stated that insurance companies do not take this map into consideration as they have their own parameters to work with around insurance for homes in fire zones.

MOTION: **Motion by Commissioner Stump** to recommend approval of the Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map Ordinance and Resolution. **Seconded by Council Member Ristow.**

VOTE: **Motion passes unanimously.**

OTHER BUSINESS

3. Consider Whether the Town Should Retain a Separate General Plan Committee and Provide a Recommendation to the Town Council.

Ryan Rosenberg provided an explanation as to why he asked for this item to be brought before the Committee.

Ryan Rosenberg stated that there are no members of the public present.

Committee Members discussed the matter.

Maria Ristow

When we think about the Housing Element Advisory Board, we created this to ensure the residents were involved due to other jurisdictions getting backlash when the Planning Commission did it. It's important to have an ad hoc committee to help discuss, offer advice, and allow for additional engagement of the public.

Ryan Rosenberg

There is value in having a dedicated group when it comes to major changes to the General Plan.

Rob Stump

Having only eight meetings in a four-year period speaks for itself. How involved are you as a volunteer if we rarely meet? It might be more valuable to sit on another committee that meets regularly.

Emily Thomas

It is important to state that this body met 30 times during the four-year period, but we were not considered the GPC. We were listed as the GPAC and HEAB. The data provided doesn't fully tell the story. If we decide to dissolve this Committee, that doesn't mean that GPAC or HEAB won't occur, but the GPC is the key group of those ad hoc committees. The concern is what is on the horizon in terms of General Plan amendments to come soon, specifically the Land Use Element.

Maria Ristow

Did we retain the General Plan Advisory Committee, or has that been dissolved?

Gabrielle Whelan

Yes it was dissolved.

Maria Ristow

Is there a mechanism that this body remains as a group and be notified when these larger amendments are coming and come together to facilitate the meetings, or is dissolving just that? And we have to start from scratch?

Gabrielle Whelan

You can recommend, to Council, an amendment to the resolution around committee duties to only involve the Land Use or Community Design Element, or to meet as needed, or quarterly.

Joel Paulson

When the Council created the GPAC or HEAB, they added additional members outside of the General Plan Committee. It is typically four additional members.

Ryan Rosenberg

We have three citizens on the committee, whereas the other members are Council and Planning Commissioners. We, as community members, want to provide insight and support, so if there are topics that need this Committee, I would be happy to do it, but as it stands right now, a 21-minute meeting isn't worth the overhead of staff time to facilitate this meeting.

Emily Thomas

Could we make some sort of recommendation to Council around it being at Staff's discretion that an item come before the GPC versus Planning Commission. It might be helpful for staff to have an item go to GPC before it goes to Planning Commission, then to Council.

Joel Paulson

The reality of it all is that we have to change the duties, so it won't be as simple to make the changes because we can't really pick and choose what those duties should be. We would have to have a strict definition.

Ryan Rosenberg

A recommendation to the Council could be to change the purpose of this group to be the group who reviews the fundamental changes of the Land Use within the next six months, otherwise the Committee should dissolve.

Jeffrey Barnett

Is there a benefit to having the General Plan Advisory Committee?

Joel Paulson

We have a group of nine members, of which three of you are from Planning Commission, and two are from the Council. We would recruit four members of the public. In the scenario of dissolving, we would be recruiting eight.

Ryan Rosenberg

With the GPAC dissolved already, it would be like starting from scratch anyway. There should be a time limit because it shouldn't take a year or two years to meet. The Council should be able to determine when the ad hoc committee is needed.

Rasha Lashin

As the newest member, I applied and interviewed twice because I wanted to be part of the Committee. But if this really isn't going to drive the outcomes we are looking for, and it's not going to get us where we want us to be, then I am fine with dissolving.

Ryan Rosenberg

The Council, with staff support, can discuss what modifications to this body could be to have more specific duties.

Joel Paulson

We will bring this discussion before the Council to get direction on how to proceed. We can offer suggestions about dissolving the Committee, modifying the duties to be major changes versus minor changes, which could go to the Planning Commission, or modifying the meeting schedule.

Emily Thomas

Whatever direction allows for less staff time for what tends to be a 20-minute meeting is what I am for.

Ryan Rosenberg

I don't know if I like being on a committee that never meets. It looks bad being on an inactive committee when I want to do work supporting the community.

Maria Ristow

Unless we know we have a large project coming up, it's not worth keeping this Committee together. I just want to be sure we encourage our community members to be encouraged to still apply for new committees. On top of staff time, the cost of noticing is a factor.

Jeffrey Barnett

I agree with all the arguments made tonight. I believe the Council can make an ad hoc committee whenever needed, so I am ready to move forward with a motion.

MOTION: **Motion by Commissioner Barnett** to forward a recommendation to the Town Council to dissolve the General Plan Committee, but to continue utilizing ad hoc committees that are comprised of members of the Planning Commission, Council, and public representatives. **Seconded by Commissioner Thomas.**

VOTE: **Motion passed unanimously.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the May 14, 2025, meeting as approved by the General Plan Update Advisory Committee.

Joel Paulson, Director of Community Development