



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 09/01/2026

ITEM NO: 11

DATE: August 27, 2026
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Chris Constantin, Town Manager
SUBJECT: **Consider a Recommendation of Approval by the Planning Commission on Proposed Changes and Additions to the Town's Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Projects. Not Subject to CEQA Review Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3) Because It Can Be Seen with Certainty That There Is No Possibility that the Changes and Additions to the Town's Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Projects Would Have a Significant Effect on the Environment. All Projects for Which the Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Projects Will Apply Will Undergo Separate CEQA Review and Approval. Project Location: Town Wide. Applicant: Town of Los Gatos. Project Planner: Sean Mullin.**

RECOMMENDATION: Accept the Planning Commission's recommendation and adopt the Resolution approving changes and additions to the Town's Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Projects.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action. Adopting the draft Resolution would not in itself result in an impact on the Town's budget.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

The changes and additions to the Town's Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Projects (ODS) supports the Town's core goal of Community Character and 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

PREPARED BY: Sean Mullin, AICP
Planning Manager

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

Housing Element.

BACKGROUND:

On November 15, 2022, the Town Council adopted Resolution 2022-072 adopting the ODS. Adoption of the ODS was the culmination of a three-year effort involving the Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning Commission Subcommittee, and the Los Gatos community. Planning staff led the effort and worked with a consultant, M-Group, to write the ODS.

The preparation of the ODS was in response to State legislation (Senate Bill (SB) 167, SB 35, and SB 330) requiring jurisdictions to adopt Objective standards and to implement them in a streamlined review of qualifying housing development applications, such as multi-family and residential mixed-use developments. Objective standards are defined under State law as “standards that involve no personal or subjective judgement by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant or proponent and the public official prior to submittal” (California Government Code, Section 65913.4).

The purpose of the ODS is to:

- Comply with State housing legislation;
- Implement the State-required streamlined and ministerial review processes for qualifying housing proposals;
- Ensure that qualifying proposals align with the Town's expectations and vision to maintain and support the character of the Town;
- Provide a set of clear criteria to guide development; and
- Establish an Objective framework by which a qualifying project is evaluated.

Since their adoption, the Town's ODS have been implemented in the review of many qualifying Planning applications.

On May 7, 2024, the Town Council voted to direct staff to approach M-Group, the consultant that assisted in drafting the Town's current ODS, and ask for a proposal to work on additional standards related to view standards, architectural styles, and high-quality building design. Further, the Town Council asked that M-Group speak to their experience developing ODS for these topics.

On August 6, 2024, staff and M-Group provided feedback on additional standards. The Council requested that staff issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to qualified providers to address the development of additional ODS in the following areas:

- High-quality building design: ODS are to focus on façade materials to ensure high-quality building design that reflects the existing character of the Town.

- Architectural style: ODS must evaluate the architecture within the immediate neighborhood to determine the architectural styles that are consistent and appropriate for the neighborhood.
- Height transitions: ODS shall provide effective strategies for appropriate massing transitions between zones/densities (i.e., from new multi-story buildings to single-family neighborhoods). Consideration of solar access impacts are also to be evaluated.
- All new ODS should also consider small, multi-family housing.

The Town distributed an RFP in September 2024 and received three proposals. Staff interviewed each candidate since all submissions met the qualifications provided in the RFP. After interviewing the three qualified candidates, staff selected Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc. based on the experience, timeline, and qualifications provided in their proposal. Through an existing partnership with Lisa Wise Consulting, the consultant team also includes staff from Urban Planning Partners, who provide many opportunities for community engagement and collaboration to ensure all voices are heard.

In April 2025, staff and the consultant initiated the ODS project. Initial timelines and an engagement plan were established to guide the development of updated and additional ODS.

On September 9, 2025, the consultant conducted focus groups where participants provided observations and suggestions to help identify trends and patterns in existing and recent development. A summary of the findings from the focus groups is included as Attachment 4, Exhibit 3.

On October 22, 2025, the consultant delivered a Technical Analysis and Evaluation Memo examining the regulatory framework, input collected, example projects, and initial analysis for revisions (Attachment 4, Exhibit 4). The analysis and evaluation helped set the direction for the development of the updated and additional ODS. The consultant also prepared a Recommendations Memo providing recommendations on specific text, graphics, and implementation updates (Attachment 4, Exhibit 5).

On December 4, 2025, staff and the consultant conducted a community open house at the Los Gatos Adult Recreation Center. Attendees provided thoughts and insights on the ODS project objectives: high-quality building design and site design; building massing and height transitions; and architectural character and details. A Summary Memo for the Community Open House is included as Attachment 4, Exhibit 6.

On March 17, 2026, the Town Council and Planning Commission held a Joint Study Session to provide the consultant team with Town Council, Planning Commission, and community input and direction prior to the preparation of the Administrative Draft ODS. During the Study Session, the consultant team introduced the ODS project; provided an overview of community outreach and feedback; and presented several topics for consideration by the Council,

Commission, and community. The feedback and direction from the Study Session was essential in shaping the Administrative Draft ODS. A Summary Memo for the Joint Study Session is included as Attachment 4, Exhibit 7.

On June 18, 2026, the Draft ODS was posted on the Town's website. Staff notified the public through social media outlets and direct email to architects and designers.

On June 24, 2026, the Planning Commission received the staff report and considered public comments on the Draft ODS (Attachment 4). The Planning Commission discussed the matter and forwarded suggested edits in their recommendation of approval to Town Council (see Verbatim Minutes in Attachment 5).

DISCUSSION:

On June 24, 2026, the Planning Commission forwarded a recommendation of approval of the draft ODS to the Council (Attachments 4 and 5). The recommendation included 18 suggested edits to the draft ODS. In response, staff prepared an errata document identifying all 18 suggested edits, providing staff's comments on each proposed edit, and detailing the corresponding revisions made to the Draft ODS, as provided in Attachment 6.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Throughout the process and prior to the June 24, 2026, Planning Commission meeting and the September 1, 2026, Town Council meeting, staff and the consultant conducted several outreach opportunities, as detailed above, to solicit feedback on the project from the community and stakeholders. Additionally, staff contacted professional organizations, design professionals, developers, and residents to inform them about the Planning Commission and Town Council meetings; encouraging participation and written comment on the Draft ODS. In addition to the direct contact summarized above, staff notified the public of the September 1, 2026, Town Council meeting on the Town's website through the following media and social media resources:

- On the Town's website home page, What's New;
- On the Town's webpage dedicated to objective standards; and
- On the Town's social media accounts.

At the time of this report's preparation, the Town has not received any public comment.

CONCLUSION:

At the Council's direction, staff and the consultant developed the updated Draft ODS that addresses high-quality building design, architectural style, and height transitions; as well as consideration for small, multi-family housing (Attachment 2). The updated Draft ODS also includes revisions to existing standards to improve effectiveness and increase clarity. The update efforts incorporated significant public engagement, including: Town Council meetings for project initiation; six consultant-lead focus groups; a community open house; Town Council/Planning Commission joint study session; and public outreach through direct emails, the Town's website, and social media channels. The Planning Commission forwarded a recommendation of approval to the Council that included several suggested edits.

Staff recommends that the Council:

- Receive and consider public comments;
- Complete the review of the updated Draft ODS (Attachment 2);
- Consider the Planning Commission's suggested edits and staff's input as outlined in the errata document (Attachment 6);
- Provide input on any additional modifications to the updated Draft ODS (Attachment 2); and
- Adopt the draft Resolution to approve the updated Draft ODS (Attachment 1).

COORDINATION:

This report was coordinated with the offices of the Town Manager and Town Attorney.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

The project is not subject to review under the CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the changes and additions to the Town's Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Projects would have a significant effect on the environment. All projects for which the Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Projects will apply will undergo separate CEQA review and approval, which includes potential exemptions from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080(b)(1).

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SUBJECT: Update to the Town's Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards

DATE: August 27, 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Draft Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Residential Projects
3. Draft Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Residential Projects in Track Changes
4. June 24, 2026, Planning Commission Staff Report with Exhibits
5. June 24, 2026, Planning Commission Verbatim Minutes
6. Errata of Planning Commission Suggestions
7. LWC Presentation Slides