

August 12, 2026

Process:

For projects that are proceeding under a ministerial process, does it mean the application can be submitted to building department directly with all the engineering calculations. Or does it still go thru a 30-days planning ministerial review? Compare to conventional architectural and site review what steps/timing are different? Story pole and public hearing? And do we still have an option for DRC?

Previous SB 9 standards:

Exterior materials – Guidelines for maximum light reflectivity value for properties in the Hillside Area. Does this allow averaging of the LRV among all surfaces, or all surfaces have to be below the LRV?

Second story location – plate height

Instead of restricting the first and second floor plates to be 10ft and 8ft, can we have the options to split the difference (such as 9ft and 9ft or 9'-6" on the first floor and 8'-6" on the second floor)? That way home owners can have options to have 7 or 8ft door and window head height on both floors. This will also help with the building proportion and also the privacy window sill requirement.

Design Guidelines Added:

Site Grading:

Site grading is limited to footprint of the house, driveway, parking and vehicular turnaround areas. Can this also include a min 5ft walkway around the house for egress and access? For houses without patios, there needs to be a walkway connecting all the exit doors for egress and fire access. So restricting the grading to just driveway and house footprint doesn't seem to be enough for min safety.

Two-story Articulation

In addition to the architectural features: would it be possible to allow for two story height wall if it's less than a certain width? For example say less than a certain percentage (25%) or a certain width (say 6ft) of the building façade. Often we have stair element on the exterior wall that has two-story walls. Also to clarify, can 6 inches be enough to be considered as stepping back the wall plane?

Again appreciate everyone's effort on this. Hope these notes/suggestions are helpful.

-Jessie Delucchi

Attn: Planning Commission Members & Planning Staff

I'd like to provide some feedback to the Town regarding the proposed changes to the Objective Design Standards for single and two family dwelling unit developments. We understand that the state laws have been changing rapidly, and new rulings from courts have required even more changes. We also understand that this is a process that must encompass and create solutions that both work for the our unique community, and at the same time satisfy the borage of state laws in a lasting way.

For the most part, we applaud these efforts and the way the new rules clarify the new process, and provide optional paths depending on the priorities of the project, and options to choose from for most objective design standard. We have a just a couple caveats that we'd like you to reconsider.

The proposed objective standard the requires only an 8 foot wall plate on the second floor is not a good standard for a number of reasons. In the last 30 years of designing homes both in the R-1 districts and the hillside, the minimum plate we have ever proposed is 9 feet. And this is for a very simple reason. All new homes have 8 foot doors. That is an industry standard for the quality and caliber of homes that the residents of Los Gatos would expect. With a small header and double top plates, the minimum plate is 9 feet. Palo Alto and Cupertino do not have this rule, nor should Los Gatos.

The other item that I think we come against all the time, is the requirement to have ALL two story wall planes broken up with some kind of decoration, with primarily architecture-dictating elements. This rule is also part of the residential design guidelines. While I understand the necessity to address plain tall walls, we have many beautiful older homes in our existing neighborhoods that do not have one of these features. What they so well is balance the proportions of a vertical wall plane with the walls that are broken with a roof line. For example, we see homes that often have wood siding, have a two story wall with a gable roof on one side for just 30-40% of the facade. The remaining portion of the house has a deep porch below and a stepped back second story. This is a formula seen often. And none of these other adornments are required to make them attractive. It's more about the propositions and less about breaking up EVERY single two story wall. I see signs of this rule getting out of hand from years of this use being in place. Very chopped up overly complicated elevations that could be so much more attractive without this rule. It's about proportion, not every wall.

Thank you so much for considering these suggestions.

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