



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 06/10/2026

ITEM NO: 2

DATE: June 5, 2026  
TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director  
SUBJECT: Consider a Request for Approval to Construct a New Second-Story Addition to an Existing Single-Family Residence on Nonconforming Property Zoned R-1:8. **Located at 193 Howes Drive.** APN 527-43-021. Architecture and Site Application S-26-007. Categorically Exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15301: Existing Facilities. Property Owners: Neeraj Goel. Applicant: Laura Cuda. Project Planner: Suray Nathan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Denial.

PROJECT DATA:

General Plan Designation: Low Density Residential  
Zoning Designation: R-1:8 – Single-Family Residential (8,000 square feet minimum)  
Applicable Plans & Standards: General Plan, Residential Design Guidelines  
Parcel Size: 6,970 square feet

Surrounding Area:

|       | Existing Land Use           | General Plan            | Zoning |
|-------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| North | Residential                 | Low Density Residential | R-1:8  |
| South | Residential                 | Low Density Residential | R-1:8  |
| East  | Residential                 | Low Density Residential | R-1:8  |
| West  | Residential and Public Park | Low Density Residential | R-1:8  |

CEQA:

The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15301: Existing Facilities.

PREPARED BY: Suray Nathan  
Assistant Planner

Reviewed by: Planning Manager and Community Development Director

FINDINGS:

- The project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15301: Existing Facilities.
- The project meets the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations).
- The project is in compliance with the Residential Design Guidelines for single-family residences not located in the hillside area.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- As required by Section 29.20.150 of the Town Code, the considerations in review of an Architecture and Site application were all made in reviewing this project.

ACTION:

The decision of the Planning Commission is final unless appealed within ten days.

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is located on the south side of Howes Drive, approximately 1,350 feet south of Los Gatos-Almaden Road (Exhibit 1). The 6,970-square foot subject lot is currently developed with a 1,088-square foot single-story residence and an attached 499-square foot garage on a nonconforming lot. The lot is nonconforming as it does not meet the zone's 8,000-square foot minimum lot size standard (Exhibit 8). Surrounding properties are developed with one-story single-family residences.

On September 11, 2025, the applicant submitted a Minor Residential Development application to construct a new second-story addition to an existing single-story residence. During the application review process, staff encouraged the applicant to reduce the floor area to avoid being the largest residence in the immediate neighborhood to better align with the Ranch-style residences in the neighborhood. In the Letter of Justification (Exhibit 4), the applicant attributes the home's relative size to the smaller lot sizes and lack of prior additions on neighboring properties.

The project meets all technical requirements of the Town Code, including height, floor area, building coverage, parking, and setbacks.

Pursuant to Section 29.20.480 (f) of the Town Code, if the Planning Director determines that the application cannot be approved because it does not comply with the Town's Development Standards and the applicant is unwilling to revise the plans further, then the applicant may file an Architecture and Site application (including the required fee) and the application shall be considered by the Planning Commission. The project is being referred to the Planning Commission as an Architecture and Site application, as staff is unable to approve the proposed

residence due to concerns that the proposed residence would be the largest in the immediate neighborhood in terms of floor area and FAR, exceeding the next-largest residence by 668 square feet. Additionally, it would be the first two-story home in the immediate neighborhood.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

##### A. Location and Surrounding Neighborhood

The subject property is located on the south side of Howes Drive, approximately 1,350 feet south of Los Gatos-Almaden Road (Exhibit 1). There are no existing two-story residences within the immediate neighborhood.

##### B. Project Summary

The applicant is proposing to expand the existing 1,088-square foot single-story residence with a 364-square foot first-story addition and a 876-square foot second-story addition for a total square footage of 2,328 square feet (Exhibit 8).

##### C. Zoning Compliance

A single-family residence is permitted in the R-1:8 zone. The project meets the objective standards of the zoning code for height, floor area, building coverage, parking, and setbacks.

#### DISCUSSION:

##### A. Architecture and Site Analysis

The applicant proposes expanding an existing 1,088-square-foot, single-family home with a 364-square-foot first-story addition and a new 876-square-foot second-story addition. The resulting two-story residence would be 2,328 square feet; the maximum allowed for the lot (Exhibit 8). The proposed project would comply with the Town's demolition calculation and would not be considered a new residence. A summary of the floor area for the proposed residence is included in the table below.

| <b>Floor Area Summary</b> |                    |                    |                    |                       |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
|                           | <b>Existing SF</b> | <b>Addition SF</b> | <b>Proposed SF</b> | <b>Max Allowed SF</b> |
| First Floor               | 1,088              | 364                | 1,452              | <b>2,328</b>          |
| Second Floor              | --                 | 876                | 876                |                       |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>1,088</b>       | <b>1,240</b>       | <b>2,328</b>       |                       |

The request is being considered by the Planning Commission due to concerns related to the proposed residence being the largest in the immediate neighborhood in terms of floor area and FAR, exceeding those of the next-largest residence by 668 square feet and FAR by 0.05. Additionally, it would be the first two-story home in the immediate neighborhood.

**B. Neighborhood Compatibility**

The immediate neighborhood consists of one-story, single-family Ranch-style residences. Based on Town and County records, the residences in the immediate area range in size from 1,020 to 1,660 square feet. The FAR ranges from 0.13 to 0.28. The proposed residence would be 2,328 square feet with a FAR of 0.33, making it the largest residence in the immediate neighborhood in both square footage and FAR. Pursuant to Town Code, the maximum allowable square footage for the 6,970-square foot lot is 2,328 square feet with a maximum FAR of 0.33. The table below reflects the current conditions of the immediate neighborhood:

| Address              | Zoning | Residence Floor Area | Garage Floor Area | Total Floor Area | Lot Size | Residence FAR | No. of Stories |
|----------------------|--------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------|---------------|----------------|
| 193 Howes Dr (Ex.)   | R-1:8  | 1,088                | 499               | 1,587            | 6,970    | 0.16          | 1              |
| 193 Howes Dr (Prop.) | R-1:8  | 2,328                | 499               | 2,827            | 6,970    | 0.33          | 2              |
| 189 Howes Dr         | R-1:8  | 1,020                | 484               | 1,504            | 5,904    | 0.17          | 1              |
| 185 Howes Dr         | R-1:8  | 1,088                | 458               | 1,546            | 6,059    | 0.18          | 1              |
| 201 Howes Dr         | R-1:8  | 1,375                | 456               | 1,831            | 11,000   | 0.13          | 1              |
| 205 Howes Dr         | R-1:8  | 1,375                | 456               | 1,831            | 6,000    | 0.23          | 1              |
| 210 Howes Dr         | R-1:8  | 1,660                | 456               | 2,116            | 6,000    | 0.28          | 1              |
| 206 Howes Dr         | R-1:8  | 1,612                | 461               | 2,073            | 6,000    | 0.27          | 1              |
| 202 Howes Dr         | R-1:8  | 1,660                | 456               | 2,116            | 6,300    | 0.26          | 1              |
| 203 Howes Dr         | R-1:8  | 1,375                | 456               | 1,831            | 6,300    | 0.22          | 1              |

The applicant asserts that the home's size stands out because the subject lot is nonconforming. The lot is nonconforming as it does not meet the zone's 8,000-square foot minimum lot size standard. However, nonconforming parcels define the neighborhood's character; only a single lot in the immediate area meets the R-1:8 zone's 8,000-square-foot minimum standard (Exhibit 4).

**C. Building Design**

The proposed two-story residence transforms a single-story traditional Ranch-style architecture with wood siding into a two-story residence designed in a modern transitional architectural style with stucco siding (Exhibit 8).

The Town's Consulting Architect reviewed the proposed residence on September 22, 2025, and was generally supportive of the design, stating that it is modest in size and scale, but would be the first two-story home in the immediate neighborhood (Exhibit 5).

The Consulting Architect made four recommendations to better align the project with the immediate neighborhood and Residential Design Guidelines. These are detailed below, along with the applicant and staff's italicized responses (Exhibit 6).

1. Extend the first-floor eave and roof across the two-story wall and set the second-floor Great Room wall back from the first-floor wall line.

Applicant Response: *Plans revised to provide visual relief between two stories with intersecting roof plane.*

Staff Response: *The applicant extended the first-floor eave and roof across the two-story wall, but did not set back the second-floor Great Room wall (Exhibit 8; Sheet A3.5).*

2. Provide more uniformity in the size and proportions of all windows in the house.

Applicant Response: *Window size and configuration revised to create consistent grouping and size to better complement the style in both the front and back elevations.*

Staff Response: *The applicant provided greater uniformity in window size and proportions, except for the window for the proposed stairway. The Consulting Architect recommended modifying the stairway window to match the style and alignment of the other rear windows for greater architectural consistency. (Exhibit 8; Sheet A3.5).*

3. Consider a special window treatment in the Great Room within a more organized pattern.

Applicant Response: *The materials are revised and clarified, and incorporate horizontal siding on portions of the front elevation.*

Staff Response: *The applicant incorporated the recommendations provided by the Consulting Architect.*

4. The applicant proposes the change in wall materials from horizontal siding to smooth stucco. Generally, for a small-scale house like this, a change of material would not likely be objectionable, but staff may wish to discuss the change before approving it.

Staff Response: *The Consulting Architect highlights a conflict with Residential Design Guideline 3.8.2, which mandates façade materials that reflect the surrounding neighborhood. Because the applicant proposes a full-height stucco finish in an area dominated by wood-sided homes, staff defers to the Planning Commission to evaluate if the proposal meets the intent of the Guidelines.*

#### D. Tree Impacts

The subject property contains one protected tree, which will remain. Furthermore, the project will not impact any trees on adjacent properties.

E. Parking

Pursuant to Section 29.10.150(c)(1) of the Town Code, a single-family residence requires two on-site parking spaces. An existing attached two-car garage will remain to meet the minimum required parking spaces.

F. Neighbor Outreach

The applicant has been in communication with the surrounding neighbors regarding the proposed project. A summary of their outreach efforts is included as Exhibit 7. At the time of preparation of this report, no public comment has been received.

G. CEQA Determination

The project is Categorical Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15301: Existing Facilities.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Story poles and project signage were installed on the subject property prior to the mailing of notices for the public hearing. Written notice was sent to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the subject property. At the time of preparation of this report, no public comment has been received.

CONCLUSION:

A. Summary

The applicant is requesting approval of an Architecture and Site application for a 364-square foot first-story addition and a new 876-square foot second-story addition to an existing 1,088-square foot single-story residence (Exhibit 8). The project is consistent with the property's zoning and General Plan Land Use designation. The project complies with the objective standards of the Town Code related to allowable floor area, setbacks, building coverage, parking, and height. The proposed residence would be the first two-story home and the largest residence in the immediate neighborhood in terms of floor area and FAR. The project was reviewed by the Town's Consulting Architect, who provided four recommendations to improve its consistency with the Residential Design Guidelines. The applicant responded to the Consulting Architect's feedback by implementing some of the recommendations. The project is referred to the Planning Commission because the proposed additions would establish the first two-story structure and the largest overall residence within the immediate neighborhood.

B. Recommendation

Based on the analysis above, staff recommends denial of the Architecture and Site application based on concerns related to size of the addition, neighborhood compatibility, and consistency with the Residential Design Guidelines.

C. Alternatives

Alternatively, the Commission can:

1. Approve the application by taking the following actions:
  - a. Make the finding that the proposed project is categorically exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15301: Existing Facilities (Exhibit 2);
  - b. Make the finding that the project complies with the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations) (Exhibit 2);
  - c. Make the finding that the project complies with the Town's Residential Design Guidelines for single-family residences not located in the hillside area (Exhibit 2);
  - d. Make the considerations as required by Section 29.20.150 of the Town Code for granting approval of an Architecture and Site application (Exhibit 2); and
  - e. Approve Architecture and Site application S-26-007 with the conditions contained in Exhibit 3 and the development plans in Exhibit 8.
2. Approve the application with additional and/or modified conditions; or
3. Continue the matter to a date certain with specific direction.

EXHIBITS:

1. Location Map
2. Required Findings
3. Recommended Conditions of Approval
4. Letter of Justification
5. Consulting Architect's Report, dated September 22, 2025
6. Applicant's Response to the Consulting Architect's Report, dated February 10, 2026
7. Summary of Applicant's Neighborhood Outreach
8. Development Plans

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