



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 12/10/2019

ITEM NO: 2

DATE: December 6, 2019
TO: Council Policy Committee
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Discuss and provide direction on potential modifications to the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines regarding below grade square footage.

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss and provide direction on potential modifications to the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines (HDS&G) regarding below grade square footage.

BACKGROUND:

On February 26, 2019 and May 28, 2019, the Policy Committee reviewed potential modifications to Chapter IV (Development Intensity) and Chapter IX (Project Review and Approval Process) of the HDS&G regarding certain project review processes. After discussion, the Committee recommended approval of the modifications to Chapter IV (Development Intensity) and Chapter IX (Project Review and Approval Process) of the HDS&G and provided direction to staff to modify language in all chapters of the HDS&G to be consistent with previous HDS&G amendments and recent amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

On August 14, 2019, the Planning Commission considered the proposed modifications to the HDS&G and forwarded a recommendation of approval to the Town Council, with additional modifications.

On November 5, 2019, the Town Council considered the proposed modifications to the HDS&G and adopted Resolution 2019-055, approving the modifications as recommended by the Policy Committee. Additionally, a motion for the Policy Committee to consider the issue of below grade square footage was passed unanimously.

PREPARED BY: Joel Paulson
Community Development Director

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, and Town Attorney

PAGE 2 OF 2

SUBJECT: Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines Modifications

DATE: December 6, 2019

DISCUSSION:

At the meeting of August 14, 2019, the Planning Commission recommended additional modifications to the HDS&G. One of the additional modifications was to Chapter IV (Development Intensity) to remove a significant below grade square footage element as a condition to approve a residential project in excess of the maximum floor area (Attachment 1, page 30). The Planning Commission also discussed adding language to Chapter V (Architectural Design) to encourage applicants to place additional square footage below grade to reduce the visual appearance of above grade bulk and mass (Attachment 2, page 38).

The following language shown in underline font was forwarded to the Town Council for its consideration to be added to Section F. Minimize building bulk and mass, Guideline 1., k. (Attachment 2, page 38):

- k. Excavate or use below-grade rooms to reduce effective bulk. The visual area of the building can be minimized through a combined use of grading and landscaping techniques. Utilize below-grade rooms for additional floor area to reduce the appearance of above grade bulk and mass.

The Town Code defines floor area as “the entire enclosed area of all floors that are more than four feet above the proposed grade, measured from the outer face of exterior walls or in the case of party walls from the centerline. Gross floor area also includes any part of exterior balconies or walkways above the ground floor required for ingress and egress. Ornamental balconies and outside unroofed corridors not required for ingress or egress are excluded. The area of elevator shafts and stairwells is also included except on the ground floor.” Below grade square footage that is less than four feet above the proposed grade is exempt and is not considered to be countable floor area.

Staff will be available at the meeting to answer questions and looks forward to receiving direction on potential modifications to the HDS&G.

COORDINATION:

The preparation of this report was coordinated with the Town Manager’s Office.

Attachments:

1. Chapter IV (Development Intensity) of the HDS&G (four pages)
2. Chapter V (Architectural Design) of the HDS&G (12 pages)