



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PLANNING COMMISSION
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 06/25/2025

ITEM NO: 2

DATE: June 20, 2025
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Consider a Request for Approval to Demolish an Existing Single-Family Residence, Construct a New Single-Family Residence, Site Improvements Requiring a Grading Permit, and a Zone Change from O (Office) to R-1:8 (Single-Family Residential, Minimum Lot Size of 8,000 Square Feet). **Located at 14331 Capri Drive.** APN 406-32-004. Architecture and Site Application S-24-043 and Zone Change Application Z-23-005. Categorically Exempt Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303: New Construction, and Section 15061(b)(3): Common Sense Exemption. Property Owner: Ravi Kiran Vallamdas. Applicant: Gordon K. Wong. Project Planner: Ryan Safty.

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider a request for approval to demolish an existing single-family residence, construct a new single-family residence, site improvements requiring a Grading Permit, and a zone change from O (Office) to R-1:8 (Single-Family Residential, minimum lot size of 8,000 square feet), located at 14331 Capri Drive.

PROJECT DATA:

General Plan Designation:	Low Density Residential
Current Zoning Designation:	O, Office
Applicable Plans and Standards:	General Plan, Residential Design Guidelines
Parcel Size:	13,092 square feet

PREPARED BY: Ryan Safty
Associate Planner

Reviewed by: Planning Manager and Community Development Director

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	Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial	C-1
West	Residential	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 15303: New Construction, and Section 15061(b)(3): Common Sense Exemption.

FINDINGS:

- The (Architecture and Site application) project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, 15303: New Construction.
- The (Zone Change application) is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15061(b)(3), in that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed amendments to the Town Code will have a significant effect on the environment.
- As required by Section 29.10.09030(e) of the Town Code for the demolition of an existing residence.
- The project meets the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations).
- The project complies with the Residential Design Guidelines.
- The project is consistent with the General Plan and its Elements.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- As required by Section 29.20.150 of the Town Code for granting approval of an Architecture and Site application.

ACTION:

The Planning Commission will provide a recommendation to the Town Council who will render the final decision on the proposal.

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is located at the southwest corner of Capri Drive and Vasona Avenue (Exhibit 1). The 13,092-square foot lot is zoned O (Office) and is currently developed with a 1,128-square foot single-family residence and a detached, 1,150-square foot, two-story structure which includes two permitted Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU), one on each floor.

The applicant submitted an Architecture and Site application to demolish the existing residence and construct a new, two-story single-family residence and associated site grading, and a Zone Change application to change the property zoning from O (Office) to R-1:8 (Single-Family Residential) to match the existing and proposed use and underlining General Plan Land Use Designation of Low Density Residential.

The existing residence was built in 1940 and therefore was considered historic per Town Code as it was built prior to 1941. In 2023, the applicant submitted for Historic Preservation Committee review to remove the pre-1941 property from the Historic Resources Inventory. On June 28, 2023, the Historic Preservation Committee approved the request. The existing ADUs were permitted in 1989 and are allowed to remain.

The proposed project requests a zone change from O (Office) to R-1:8 (Single-Family Residential) and therefore requires a recommendation from the Planning Commission with a final decision being made by the Town Council. Additionally, the proposed residence would result in the first two-story home, largest residence in terms of square footage by 1,237 square feet, and largest residence in terms of FAR in the immediate neighborhood. The applicant also has not addressed all of the Consulting Architect's recommendations. Therefore, the application requires Planning Commission consideration, with the final decision on both the Architecture and Site and Zone Change applications being made by the Town Council.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A. Location and Surrounding Neighborhood

The subject property is 13,092 square feet, located at the southwest corner of Capri Drive and Vasona Avenue (Exhibit 1). The property is currently developed with a 1,128-square foot single-family residence and a detached, 1,150-square foot, two-story structure including two permitted ADUs. Single-family residential development surrounds the property with a commercial use located across Capri Drive, east of the subject site.

B. Project Summary

The applicant proposes construction of a new two-story residence with site improvements requiring a Grading Permit, and a zone change from O (Office) to R-1:8 (Single-Family Residential) (Exhibit 4).

C. Zoning Compliance

A single-family residence is a permitted use in the R-1:8 zone. The proposed residence, with approval of the zone change, is in compliance with the maximum allowable floor area, building height, setbacks, lot coverage, and on-site parking requirements for the property, applicable to the R-1:8 zone.

DISCUSSION:A. Architecture and Site Analysis

Pursuant to Town Code Section 29.40.075, the maximum allowable square footage for the 13,092-square foot property is 3,731 square feet for a residence and 1,012 square feet for a garage. The applicant proposes demolition of the existing single-family residence and construction of a new 3,511-square foot two-story residence with a 498-square foot attached garage (Exhibit 11).

The existing two-story, 1,150-square foot structure containing the two existing ADUs would remain. Although the ADUs are not being reviewed with this application as they are existing and were previously approved, the overall maximum allowable square footage is a part of the Architecture and Site review process. Pursuant to Town Code Section 29.10.320(d)(1), ADUs are allowed a ten percent increase in the floor area ratio standards. The 13,092-square foot property receives an extra 1,200 square feet for an ADU, and the existing ADU structures are below this additional allowance at 1,150 square feet.

A summary of the floor area for the existing and proposed residence is included in the table below.

Floor Area Summary			
	Existing SF	Proposed SF	Allowed SF
Main Residence			
First Floor	1,128	1,637	--
Second Floor	--	1,874	--
Total	1,128	3,511	3,731
Below-Grade Area	0	0	--
Garage	0	498	1,012
ADU (not a part of this review)	1,150	1,150	Extra 1,200

The applicant provided a Letter of Justification summarizing the project (Exhibit 5), photographs of the existing site (Sheet G003, Exhibit 11), and Development Plans (Exhibit 11).

B. Building Design

The proposed residence would be two-stories and of Spanish Mediterranean style. The residence would be approximately 27 feet in height when the maximum of the zone is 30 feet. The existing ADU structure to remain has no distinguishable architectural style, is approximately 20 feet tall, and would be located 10 feet west of the proposed new residence.

Proposed exterior materials for the new residence include: a clay tile roof; stucco siding with painted redwood fascia boards and projecting trim; black aluminum gutters; Andersen 400 Series vinyl-clad wood windows; Spanish style garage door with stained wood finish; and wrought iron railing and window décor (Sheet A200, Exhibit 11). The front door would be oriented along Capri Drive, with the garage and vehicular access along Vasona Avenue. Covered patios are proposed on the ground floor along each street frontage, and second-story balconies are proposed along each street frontage, limiting the presence of privacy concerns as the balconies overlook the street.

The Town's Consulting Architect reviewed the proposed residence in November 2023 and noted that the property is located in an older neighborhood of mostly one-story traditional homes along with an adjacent two-story ADU and one nearby home with a partial second story (Exhibit 6). In the Issues and Concerns Section of the report, the Consulting Architect notes that the proposed house is considerably larger than other homes in the immediate neighborhood and would not be consistent with the following Residential Design Guidelines (RDG):

- 2.3.1 – Design two-story houses in predominantly one-story neighborhoods to blend with the smaller homes.
- 2.3.2 – Avoid structures with height and bulk at front and side setback lines which are significantly greater than those of the adjacent homes.
- 3.2.1 – Select an architectural style with sensitivity to the surrounding neighborhood.
- 3.3.2 – Height and bulk at front and side setbacks.
- 3.3.3 – Provide visual relief for two story walls.
- 3.6.2 – Design home entries with sensitivity to the architectural style.
- 3.6.3 – Design entries with sensitivity to the surrounding neighborhood.
- 3.7.1 – Arrange windows in patterns and groupings consistent with the architectural style and surrounding neighborhood.
- 3.7.4 – Design the windows with attention to matching the traditional details of the architectural style.

In the Recommendations Section of the report, the Consulting Architect notes that the majority of the issues and concerns are a result of the home size and building mass compared to the surrounding neighborhood and that the applicant should work to reduce

the size and mass of the proposal. In addition, the Consulting Architect provided nine recommendations for smaller changes to simplify the design and improve the project's compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. The Consulting Architect's recommendations are provided below, with the applicable RDG section in parenthesis, followed by the applicant's response in italics. The full response from the applicant is included in Exhibit 7.

1. Lower the second-floor plate height from 10 feet to 9 feet (RDG 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 3.3.2).
 - *This recommendation was incorporated.*
2. Simplify the front façade by removing the projecting formal entry (RDG 3.6.2, 3.6.3).
 - *Simplifying the front façade will result in a loss of a focal point and the 'grand-ness' when looking from the street side. We believe it is best to keep the projecting formal entry as it ties the façade together. Example neighboring properties with projecting formal entries were provided (Exhibit 7).*
3. Provide larger windows on the Family Room front façade for more visual variety (RDG 3.7.1, 3.7.4).
 - *This recommendation was incorporated.*
4. Detail the windows to be more consistent with the proposed architectural style. Two options are possible that are consistent with the style - window frames or frameless windows with deeply recessed windows. Window sashes should be wide enough to be consistent with the style. Vinyl or metal cladding over wood are common modern equivalents to traditional wood windows. If trim is used, soften the color contrast with the house body color (RDG 3.7.4).
 - *This recommendation was incorporated by softening the window trim color.*
5. Add projecting trim to visually separate the floors (RDG 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 3.3.2, 3.3.3).
 - *This recommendation was incorporated.*
6. Add trim at the bottom of the projecting bay on the right side elevation and enlarge the size of the supporting corbels. Exposed roof rafter tails were shown in a very limited area: eliminate them or carry them consistently around all eaves (RDG 3.3.3, 3.6.2).
 - *This recommendation was incorporated.*
7. Substantially recess the garage door (not related to a referenced RDG).
 - *This recommendation was incorporated with a 12-inch recess.*
8. Change the extended roof overhang at the Master Bedroom on the rear elevation to a hip roof (not related to a referenced RDG).
 - *This cannot be done as it will result in a cricket in between the two hips. In addition, the roof was carefully designed in a way to reduce the amount of 'pointy' peaks while keeping the simplicity of the ridge lines (Exhibit 7).*
9. Add windows to the garage on the rear façade to break up the current blank wall (not related to a referenced RDG).
 - *This recommendation was incorporated.*

C. Neighborhood Compatibility

The immediate neighborhood contains one-story residences and existing commercial and office uses across Capri Drive. Based on Town and County records, the residences in the immediate neighborhood range in size from 364 square feet to 2,274 square feet. The FARs range from 0.018 to 0.265. Pursuant to Section 29.40.075 of the Town Code, the maximum house FAR for the subject property is 0.285 (3,731 square feet), and the maximum garage FAR is 0.077 (1,012 square feet).

The proposed residence would have a FAR of 0.268 (3,511 square feet). The proposed residence would be the largest in terms of house floor area by 1,237 square feet and the largest in terms of FAR by 0.003. The proposed garage would have a FAR of 0.038 (498 square feet). As noted above, an existing 1,150-square foot ADU structure exists on the site and would remain with the proposal, but it does not impact the FAR comparison.

FAR Comparison - Neighborhood Analysis							
Address	Zoning	House	Garage	Total FAR	Lot Size	FAR	No. of Stories
14331 Capri Drive (Ex.)	O	1,367	600	1,967	13,092	0.104	1
14331 Capri Drive (Prop.)	R-1:8	3,511	498	4,009	13,092	0.268	2
14335 Capri Drive	R-1:8	1,776	433	2,209	7,841	0.227	1
14333 Capri Drive	R-1:8	1,714	506	2,220	7,841	0.219	1
14288 Capri Drive	C-1	1,550	560	2,110	24,394	0.064	1
14251 Winchester Blvd	C-1	13,889	0	13,889	44,340	0.313	1
14274 Capri Drive	C-1	1,067	198	1,265	11,388	0.094	1
14287 Capri Drive	R-1:8	720	528	1,248	3,920	0.184	1
581 Vasona Ave	R-1:8	1,387	216	1,603	5,227	0.265	1
585 Vasona Ave	R-1:8	364	0	364	20,473	0.018	1
590 Vasona Ave	R-1:8	2,274	1914	4,188	14,375	0.158	1
592 Vasona Ave	R-1:8	600	0	600	7,841	0.077	1

The proposed residence would comply with the maximum allowed floor area and height for the property; but would be the first two-story home in the immediate neighborhood; would be the tallest home in the immediate neighborhood; and would be the largest home in the immediate neighborhood in terms of both square footage and FAR.

The Residential Design Guidelines states that, in the context of a design's neighborhood compatibility, "the greatest attention will be given to the *immediate neighborhood* where nearby homeowners are most likely to be confronted with the new house on a daily basis, and where other residents driving by are most likely to see the new structure in the context of the nearby homes." The Residential Design Guidelines also include some consideration of the surrounding neighborhood, although less weight is given in the consideration of homes located at a greater distance from a project site. Although each are one property outside of

the *immediate neighborhood*, the properties at 589 and 594 Vasona Avenue are each two-stories and have larger FARs. 594 Vasona Avenue would be larger in terms of square footage by 422 square feet, and 589 Vasona Avenue would be taller by roughly four inches. The applicant has provided justification for the home size, mass, and design within their response to the Consulting Architect's Report in Exhibit 7 (pages 9-11). Additionally, the existing ADU structure on the property is two-stories and is proposed to remain.

D. Grading

The project includes site improvements with cumulative grading quantities exceeding 50 cubic yards, which requires approval of a Grading Permit. The Town's Parks and Public Works Engineering staff have included a condition of approval requiring submittal and evaluation of a Grading Permit in parallel with the required Building Permits (Exhibit 4).

E. Tree Impacts

There are 12 trees located on the subject property, nine of which are protected trees. No protected trees are proposed for removal, and the only tree proposed for removal (Tree #196) is a fruit tree and is not defined as a protected tree in the Town Code and therefore is not required to obtain a Tree Removal Permit or provide replacement trees. Although not required, the applicant is proposing to plant three 24-inch box olive trees along the rear yard. The recommended conditions of approval include a condition requiring tree protection measures for the protected trees consistent with Section 29.10.1005 of the Town Code (Exhibit 4), as recommended by the Consulting Arborist in Exhibit 8.

F. Parking

Section 29.10.150(c)(1) of the Town Code requires that a single-family residence provide two off-street parking spaces. The proposed project includes an attached two-car garage to meet this requirement.

G. Zone Change Analysis

To facilitate the Architecture and Site application for a new single-family residence, the applicant is requesting approval of a zone change from O to R-1:8. Residential is not a permitted use in the O zone, and residential uses are only allowed in the O zone with a Conditional Use Permit when a part of a mixed-use project. The proposal to demolish and replace the existing single-family residence necessitates this zone change.

The property is zoned O, but has a General Plan Land Use Designation of Low Density Residential, which, "provides for single-family residential properties located on generally level terrain." The surrounding neighboring properties on the west side of Capri Drive all have a Low Density Residential General Plan Designation and are zoned R-1:8 (Exhibit 1).

The proposed zone change from O to R-1:8 is consistent with both the General Plan and surrounding neighborhood.

The applicant proposes a new single-family residence on a R-1:8 zoned property. Single-family residential is a permitted use in the R-1:8 zone. The 13,092-square foot property complies with the 8,000-square foot minimum lot size, as well as the minimum frontage and depth requirements for R-1:8 properties. The proposed new residence would comply with all applicable R-1:8 zoning requirements, including maximum allowable floor area, building height, setbacks, lot coverage, and on-site parking requirements.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Story poles and signage were installed on the site and written notice was sent to property owners and tenants located within 300 feet of the subject property. At time of publication of this report, no public comments have been received.

CONCLUSION:

A. Summary

The applicant is requesting approval of an Architecture and Site application to demolish an existing single-family residence, construct a new two-story single-family residence, and a Zone Change application for a zone change from O to R-1:8. The proposed zone change is consistent with the underlining General Plan Land Use Designation for the property and is consistent with the zoning of the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed residence is in compliance with the R-1:8 objective standards of the Town Code for allowable floor area, height, setbacks, lot coverage, and on-site parking requirements. The proposed project would result in the first two-story home, largest residence in terms of square footage, by 1,237 square feet, and the largest residence in terms of FAR, by 0.003, in the immediate neighborhood. The project was reviewed by the Town's Consulting Architect who noted that the proposed house is larger than other homes in the immediate neighborhood and provided recommendations to address the consistency of the project with the Residential Design Guidelines. The applicant responded to the Consulting Architect's issues and recommendations through design revisions with the exception of meeting two recommendations. It should be noted that by slightly increasing the immediate neighborhood definition, the applicant provided justification for the home size, height, massing, and design in their Letter of Justification and Response to Consulting Architect's Report (Exhibits 5 and 7). Additionally, the existing ADU on the property is two-stories and is proposed to remain.

B. Recommendation

Architecture and Site Application

Based on the analysis above, staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation to the Town Council for denial of the Architecture and Site application based on concerns related to size, compatibility with the immediate neighborhood, and consistency with the Residential Design Guidelines, as discussed in this report.

Zone Change Application

Based on the analysis above, staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation to the Town Council for approval of the Zone Change application by taking the following actions:

1. Make the finding that the project (Zone Change application) is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act Section 15061(b)(3), in that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed amendment to the Town Code will have a significant effect on the environment;
2. Make the finding that the proposed zone change is consistent with the General Plan and its Elements (Exhibit 2); and
3. Forward a recommendation of approval of Zone Change application Z-23-005 with the conditions contained in Exhibit 4.

C. Alternatives

Architecture and Site Application

Alternatively, the Commission can:

1. Forward a recommendation to the Town Council for approval of the application by taking the following actions:
 - a. Make the finding that the proposed project (Architecture and Site application) is Categorically Exempt, pursuant to the adopted Guidelines for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15303: New Construction (Exhibit 2);
 - b. Make the findings as required by Section 29.10.09030(e) of the Town Code for the demolition of existing structures (Exhibit 2);
 - c. Make the finding that the project complies with the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations) (Exhibit 2);
 - d. Make the finding that the project complies with the Residential Design Guidelines (Exhibit 2);

- e. 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
 - f. Forward a recommendation of approval of Architecture and Site application S-24-043 with the conditions contained in Exhibit 4 and the development plans in Exhibit 11.
2. Forward a recommendation to the Town Council for approval of the Architecture and Site application with additional and/or modified conditions; or
 3. Continue the matter to a date certain with specific direction.

Zone Change Application

Alternatively, the Planning Commission can:

1. Continue the matter to a date certain with specific direction; or
2. Forward a recommendation to the Town Council for denial of the application.

EXHIBITS:

1. Location Maps (including General Plan Land Use Designations and Existing Zoning)
2. Required Findings and Considerations (Architecture and Site and Zone Change applications)
3. Draft Ordinance for Zone Change, with Exhibit A
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. Letter of Justification
6. Consulting Architect's Report
7. Applicant's Response to Consulting Architect Report
8. Consulting Arborist's Report
9. Applicant's Response to Consulting Arborist Report
10. Applicant's Summary of Neighborhood Outreach
11. Development Plans

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