



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PLANNING COMMISSION
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 08/21/2026

ITEM NO: 6

DATE: August 26, 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 Owner: Neeraj Goel. Applicant: Laura Cuda. Project Planner: Suray Nathan.

BACKGROUND:

On June 10, 2026, the Planning Commission discussed the item and received public testimony (Exhibit 9). Following deliberation, the Commission continued the item to a date certain of August 26, 2026, with specific direction for the applicant to scale down the overall building massing to improve neighborhood compatibility; and increase the setback of the second-floor great room wall to break up the rear two-story vertical plane.

According to the Letter of Justification (Exhibit 10), the applicant states they have met the Commission's directions by removing the second-floor open space above the great room, thereby reducing the structure's overall massing by 22 percent and eliminating the addition's tallest, most prominent section. This change also removes the second-story wall setback requirement for that portion of the building. Additionally, roof eaves were added to break up the rear two-story vertical plane visually.

DISCUSSION:

The project scope is generally consistent with the June 10, 2026, presentation to the Planning Commission, with two primary revisions: elimination of the second-floor open space over the great room and modification of the garage door material from wood to opaque glass (Exhibit 11).

PREPARED BY: Suray Nathan
Assistant Planner

Reviewed by: Planning Manager and Community Development Director

Elimination of the Great Room

In response to Planning Commission direction, the applicant revised the project by eliminating the second-floor open area above the great room, thereby reducing the overall building mass and bulk while still retaining the total floor area of 2,328 square feet, the maximum permitted for the lot. The revised plans reflect a reconfiguration of the second-floor primary bathroom and walk-in closet while reducing the façade of the second-story addition by approximately 10 feet, decreasing the overall massing of the addition (Exhibit 11, Sheet A3.1).

In the Letter of Justification, the applicant explains that the overall mass of the proposed structure has been reduced by 22 percent by removing the second-story volume above the great room. The applicant further states that this modification responds to both the Consulting Architect's recommendation to set back the great room and the Planning Commission's direction to reduce the building's mass and to increase the setback of the second-floor great room wall to break up the rear two-story vertical plane (Exhibit 10).

Frosted Glass Garage Door

The applicant revised the plans to feature a frosted-glass garage door, which the applicant notes will eliminate any light bleed emanating from within the garage. While the Town Consulting Architect has not evaluated this specific material change, staff notes that the Town's Residential Design Guidelines encourage the use of wood garage doors (Exhibit 11, Sheet A3.3).

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

At the time of preparation of this report, no public comments have been received.

CONCLUSION:

A. Summary

In response to Commission feedback, the applicant provided a Letter of Justification (Exhibit 10) outlining massing reductions to enhance neighborhood compatibility and citing comparable neighborhood precedents. These revisions are reflected in the updated development plans (Exhibit 11).

B. Recommendation

Should the Planning Commission determine that the revised project meets the direction provided by the Planning Commission and find merit with the proposed project, the Commission can take the actions below to approve the Architecture and Site application:

1. 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);

2. Make the finding that the project meets the objective standards of Chapter 29 of the Town Code (Zoning Regulations) (Exhibit 2);
3. Make the finding that the project is in compliance with the Residential Design Guidelines (Exhibit 2);
4. 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
5. Approve Architecture and Site application S-26-007 with the conditions contained in Exhibit 3 and the revised development plans in Exhibit 11.

C. Alternatives

Alternatively, the Commission can:

1. Continue the matter to a date certain with specific direction;
2. Approve the application with additional and/or modified conditions; or
3. Deny the application.

EXHIBITS:

Previously distributed with the June 10, 2026, Staff Report:

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

Received with this Staff Report:

9. June 10, 2026 Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
10. Letter of Justification
11. Revised Development Plans

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