To: Mayor Hudes and Members of the Town Council
From: Historic Preservation Committee
Re: Proposed Historic Preservation Committee Work Program
Date: November 13, 2025

The Historic Preservation Committee is pleased to submit the proposed Work Program for your review and consideration. The attached document outlines the Committee's overarching goal, key objectives, and a series of recommended action items designed to support the Town's historic preservation priorities.

For clarity and ease of reference, the recommended action items are organized into five categories. During the Committee's Special Meeting on October 29, 2025, members acknowledged areas of overlap among these categories; however, the Committee unanimously agreed to retain them, as each reflects important intersections and gaps within existing guiding documents and policies.

While mindful of the Town's current budget and staffing constraints, the Committee believes this Work Program is well aligned with the Town's strategic objectives and will strengthen the preservation, understanding, and stewardship of Los Gatos' historic resources. We respectfully request the Council's consideration of the proposed action items.

Respectfully submitted,
Lee Quintana, Chair
Martha Queiroz, Vice Chair
Susan Burnett, Committee Member
Alan Feinberg, Committee Member
Emily Thomas, Committee Member

Historic Preservation Work Program

Goal of the Work Program

Enhance efficiency, transparency, and understanding of the entire historic resources review and approval process for the community members, committee members/commissioners, Town Council members, and staff.

Objectives of the Work Program

- **Objective A:** Update and clarify the definitions and required findings for determining historic resource status in Town code

- **Objective B:** Provide consistency and alignment across Town documents, procedures, and code sections related to historic preservation and resources

- **Objective C:** Improve the consistency and predictability of decisions by clarifying the criteria and standards used in evaluating historic resources

- **Objective D:** Improve shared understanding of the purpose and value of historic resources through clearer documentation, communication, and education

- **Objective E:** Improve efficiency of the Historic Preservation review and approval process

- **Objective F:** Enhance historic preservation policies and procedures that support Housing Element goals

- **Objective G:** Update existing historic districts and evaluate potential districts, heritage areas, and special recognition area

Recommended Action Items

Area	Action Item	Justification	Objective
Chapter 29 Article I Division 1. - Miscellaneous **Sec. 29.10.09030. - Demolitions**	1. Clarify demolition of historic structures (c)	Article I Division 1 Sec. 29.10.09030. Demolitions and Article VIII Division 3 Sec. 29.80.310 are not consistent with each other or the Residential Design Guidelines. Sec. 29.10.09030. (c) cites criteria for permit approval for demolition of a historic structure although the requirements are not identified as findings. It is not clear how these requirements differ or relate to findings listed in Sec. 29.10.09030.(e)(2).	☐ A ☑ B ☑ C ☑ D ☑ E ☐ F ☐ G
	2 . Clarify definition of "contributor to a potential historic district"	Sec. 29.10.09030. (c) term “contributor to a potential historic district” is not defined and only used in the Bloomfield Survey.	
	3. Clarify the reason for and criteria of the “report”	In Sec. 29.10.09030.(c) the required “report” is vague and its intent is not clear; it doesn’t state if/when the report is used to determine historic resource status or other decision making.	
	4. Clarify preservation of historically or architecturally significant buildings or structures (e)(2)	Sec. 29.10.09030.(e) is not clear with regards to the difference between findings for historic and non-historic structures and its relevance to granting architecture and site applications.	
Chapter 29 Article VIII **Division 3 - Historic Preservation and LHP Landmark and Historic Preservation Overlay Zone**	5. Add definitions of the Town’s historic resources	The code does not currently include definitions of historic resources or findings in Chapter 29 Article VIII Division 3. The difference between “pre-1941”, “Historic Status Code”, and “contributor” are not defined but used to make decisions.	☑ A ☑ B ☑ C ☑ D ☑ E ☐ F ☐ G
	6. Add findings for different types of historic resources 7. Clarify the differences between the Federal/State findings and the Town’s findings for integrity 8. Clarify the difference between findings and considerations and when they are applied	Findings are only required with regards to status in the historic inventory. Considerations for all other situations are not clear.	

Recommended Action Items

	9. Change title of Sec. 29.80.290 Standards for Review from “Standards” to “Considerations” 10. Move Sec. 29.80.290 Standards for Review to follow definitions	Considerations are currently described in the code as standards. Sec. 29.80.290 outlines the review process but is currently “hidden” after less used code.	
1991 Historical Resources Survey Project **(Bloomfield Survey and Historic Inventory)**	11. Update, conduct a new survey, or use the current survey for reference only	The Bloomfield Survey was a “windshield” survey conducted 30 years ago, therefore, not all pre-1941 structures in Town were evaluated and some structures included in the survey do not meet criteria for a historic resource.	☐ A ☑ B ☑ C ☑ D ☑ E ☑ F ☑ G
	12. Add a description of the Bloomfield Survey including its purpose, study area, methodology, and final recommendations to the Residential Design Guidelines	The Bloomfield Survey is central to the review, analysis, and decision making process and its intended use is currently absent from the Residential Design Guidelines. A description of the survey will increase the understanding of the Town’s historic preservation review process.	
	13. Consider revising the 1941 construction date for historic resources	This date was chosen because it was the first year the County has comprehensive tax records for the Town. The Bloomfield Survey recommended changing the 1941 date.	
	14. Protect historic resources not currently covered under the LHP Overlay by: a. Designating additional historic districts and/or updating current historic districts as recommended by the Bloomfield Survey, starting with Glenridge b. Establishing a Heritage Area based on the Bloomfield Survey area c. Establishing special recognition areas or sites to acknowledge architectural, cultural, or aesthetic resources that are newer than 1941	There are districts in Town with a high concentration of pre-1941 structures that have been identified in the Bloomfield Survey as “potential contributors to historic districts”. The Survey suggested the addition of Historic Districts, specifically Glenridge. A Heritage Area could protect structures identified as “potential contributors to a historic district” by the Bloomfield Survey. There are areas of Town outside of current Historic Districts that have architectural, cultural, and aesthetic significance that do not qualify as a historic resource under the current 1941 standard. For example, the mosaics depicting early California life at Riviera Drive.	

Recommended Action Items

	15. Separate the Town's Inventory of Historic Resources from the Bloomfield Survey and publish the Inventory	Not all pre-1941 structures listed in the Survey meet the criteria for a Los Gatos Historic Resource. Publishing the Historic Inventory and list of the Survey would allow better public access and transparency.	
Residential Design Guidelines **Chapter 4 Historic Resources**	16. Revise and update acceptable substitute materials including window replacements and siding materials	There are many new materials available that are of high quality, integrity, and indistinguishable from traditional materials. In addition, these materials may be required by fire code and/or insurance companies for fire safety.	☐ A ☑ B ☑ C ☑ D ☑ E ☑ F ☐ G
	17. Add specific guidelines for additions and accessory structures for historic resources and historic districts	The Guidelines currently focus on the immediate neighborhood for compatibility, which is appropriate for new construction, but not for additions or accessory structures for historic resources or districts. Specific guidance for additions and accessory structures for historic resources and districts with consideration of the architecture and character defining features of the existing structure rather than immediate neighborhood would be more appropriate.	
	18. Clarify Section 4.5 Demolitions and definitions in the sidebar on page 42; cite findings required to demolish a historic resource	The process is unclear and does not align with Sec. 29.10.09030 Demolition Code.	
Other	19. Add a Flow Chart or Table of the various types referrals to the HPC	It is not clear how projects move through historic review in Town. Adding a flow chart, a table, and/or graphics would demystify the process for the various types of applications and projects that are referred to the HPC.	☐ A ☐ B ☑ C ☑ D ☑ E ☑ F ☐ G
	20. Sec. 29.40.075. - Floor area ratio Consider adjusting the garage square footage included FAR calculations for historic properties and/or historic districts zoned R-1D and R-D	Historic properties and lots in historic districts typically have smaller detached garages located at the rear of the property. Garages that are detached from historic structures minimize the mass of additions to existing structures. Changing the FAR calculation to incentivise detached garages would keep the historic pattern of neighborhoods. Alternatively, extending the 400 square foot limit to lots greater than 5,000 square feet could achieve a similar outcome.	