**LOS GATOS OBJECTIVE STANDARDS**

**SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING #4**
**November 23, 2021**

## FOCUS TOPICS

This document organizes the issues identified in the "Objective Standards Subcommittee Meeting 4 Focus Topics" file. Those issues stem from Town planning documents and are organized below by sub-topic for discussion at the third subcommittee meeting, November 23, 2021. The 120 issues that provide background for the discussion are provided below and organized according to each of the three sub-topics. Within those sub-topics, M-Group has grouped the issues into similar, finer grained categories to facilitate consideration by subcommittee members. There are 11 issues that come from the GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral that have been identified next to each issue.

### 1. BUILDING PLACEMENT (35 Issues in COMMITTEE REVIEW tab)

#### General

1. Maintain and enhance the pedestrian orientation of the existing Central Business District (CBD) *Commercial Design Guidelines*
2. "Relate buildings to existing and planned adjacent uses." *Los Gatos AHOZ Design Guidelines*
3. "Avoid turning unit back elevations and patio walls to public streets." *Los Gatos AHOZ Design Guidelines*
4. "Relate the buildings to the street and locate them on the site so that they reinforce street frontages." *Los Gatos AHOZ Design Guidelines*
5. "Buildings should be placed close to, and oriented toward, the street." *North 40 Specific Plan*
6. "Relate buildings to the street and locate them on the site so that they reinforce street frontages." *North 40 Specific Plan*
7. Care should be given in the development of project site plans to provide substantial focal points at the terminus of project entries *Commercial Design Guidelines*
8. Buildings located at these corner locations are strongly encouraged. Buildings located on corners should generally be limited to one story in height, and special care shall be taken to avoid obstructing views to the surrounding hills. *Commercial Design Guideline*

9. Require new homes to be sited to maximize privacy, livability, protection of natural plant and wildlife habitats and migration corridors. Siting should take advantage of scenic views, but should not create significant ecological or visual impacts affecting open spaces, public places, or other properties. ***GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral***
10. Ensure that public improvements and private development work together to enhance the sense of entry at outer gateways to the Town. ***GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral***
11. Reinforce prevailing neighborhood development patterns *Residential Design Guidelines*
12. Locate structures to minimize blocking sun access to living spaces and actively used outdoor areas on adjacent homes. *Residential Design Guidelines*

## Setbacks

1. Facades should be setback from public street property lines no more than five feet. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
2. Front setbacks should be similar to those of structures on adjacent parcels, but not less than ten feet unless those of adjacent structures are less. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
3. Front setbacks should be landscaped or treated with limited special hardscape paving that contrasts with the adjacent sidewalk. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
4. Side setbacks should be provided to set the structures off from their neighbors unless the building is part of a continuous storefront within the same parcel. If no side setback is provided, the building design should blend with the adjacent buildings to create a continuous storefront. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
5. Provide setbacks from street property lines to match those currently existing in the subdistrict *Commercial Design Guidelines*
6. "Require new buildings to maintain a consistent setback from the public right-of-way in order to create a well-defined streetscape. ***GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral***
7. Eliminate development setbacks to foster a more urban environment focused on corporate centers, commercial shopping areas, medical services, and hospitality uses. ***GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral***
8. Design street setbacks with sensitivity to the predominant street front character. *Residential Design Guidelines*

9. Relate building front and side setbacks to those on adjacent parcels *Residential Design Guidelines*
10. Set garages back from the front facade. *Residential Design Guidelines*

## Area-Specific Placement Guidelines

1. Since the historic buildings have no setbacks from the sidewalks on North Santa Cruz Avenue or West Main Street, no new setbacks on these streets will be permitted, either of whole structures or of parts of buildings, except for entrances. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
2. Provide larger setbacks for parcels fronting on Santa Cruz Avenue and Saratoga/Los Gatos Road. *Commercial Design Guidelines*

## Hillside Development

1. Buildings shall be located in a manner that minimizes the need for grading and preserves natural features such as prominent knolls, ridgelines, ravines, natural drainage courses, vegetation, and wildlife habitats and corridors to the maximum extent possible. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
2. The creation of permanent flat pads, except for the house footprint and area needed for access, parking and turnaround, should be avoided *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
3. Construction shall be avoided in areas with geologic hazards (e.g., slope instability, seismic hazards, etc.) as identified in the site specific geologic investigations and reports, unless adequate mitigation design measures are proposed to achieve a low level of risk. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
4. Building locations shall be selected and structures designed to minimize exposure to wildfires (also see Chapter V. Section I.). *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
5. Development should avoid areas subject to severe fire danger. In order to achieve this, development should: *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
    a Be set back from the crest of a hill
    b Not be located at the top of a canyon
    c Not be located on or adjacent to slopes greater than 30%
    d Not be located within densely wooded areas
6. Privacy impacts shall be addressed and resolved during the constraints analysis phase and initial design stage, not with mitigation measures imposed as an

afterthought. Sight lines shall be studied so that windows and outdoor areas are placed to maintain privacy. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*

7. Structures shall be designed to maximize protection from wildfires. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
8. Accessory buildings and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are permitted in compliance with the Town of Los Gatos Zoning Ordinance. Accessory buildings and ADUs shall have the same setback requirements as the main building in the hillside area. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
9. Accessory buildings and ADUs shall be integrated with the natural topography of the site and shall be compatible with other buildings by use of similar forms, colors, and materials. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*

### ADUs

1. The accessory dwelling unit shall have existing side and rear setbacks sufficient for fire safety. Town Code - Chapter 29 Sec. 29.10.320

## 2. BUILDING HEIGHT (5 Issues in COMMITTEE REVIEW tab)

### General

1. Buildings over two stories are discouraged in areas covered by these guidelines unless special circumstances warrant additional building height. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
2. Towers, spires, elevator and mechanical penthouses, cupolas, wireless telecommunication antennas, similar structures and necessary mechanical appurtenances which are not used for human activity or storage may be higher than the maximum height permitted by the zone. The use of tower elements or similar structures to provide higher ceiling heights for habitable space shall be deemed as a use intended for human activity and is therefore not exempt from the maximum height restrictions of a zone. *Town Code - Chapter 29 Sec. 29.10.090*

### Additions or Alternations to Existing Buildings

1. The height and proportion of an addition or a second story should not dominate the original structure. *Residential Design Guidelines*
2. Heights and proportions of additions and alterations should be compatible with those of the existing structures. New construction should maintain the existing scale

and character through compatible design and attention to detail while being subservient to the original building. *Commercial Design Guidelines*

### Compatibility with Adjacent Properties

1. Avoid eave lines and roof ridge lines that are substantially taller than the adjacent houses. *Residential Design Guidelines*

## 3. MASSING AND SCALE (51 Issues in COMMITTEE REVIEW tab)

### General Guidelines and Strategies

1. Avoid design which consists largely of boxes with applied design elements. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
2. Avoid visually bulky buildings *Commercial Design Guidelines*
3. Design structures to project a village scale and character *Commercial Design Guidelines*
4. Larger structures should be broken up into smaller modules to resemble a collection of small buildings. A width of twenty-five feet is suggested. This small-scale character should be carried around to any facade visible from a public way or nearby property. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
5. Upper floors should be separated from the first floor with projecting molding or other architectural detail, and incorporate elements that will reduce their visual scale and bulk. Examples include smaller windows with substantial trim or awnings, small projecting balconies, landscaped planters. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
6. "Encourage cellars for residential structures to provide "hidden" square footage in lieu of visible mass. *GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral*
7. Corner lots need to be treated with extra care when designing a new house or an addition to soften the visual mass and height and to enliven the street frontage. *Residential Design Guidelines*

### Building Additions

1. Site additions in the least conspicuous place. In many cases this is a rear or side elevation - only rarely is it a rooftop. *Residential Design Guidelines*
2. Additions should be subordinate, and compatible in scale and proportion to the historically significant portions of the existing structure. *Residential Design Guidelines*

3. Deck additions should be placed to the rear of the structure only, and should be subordinate in terms of scale and detailing. *Residential Design Guidelines*

### Garages

1. Garages shall be subservient to entries and ground floor living spaces. *Residential Design Guidelines*
2. Limit the prominence of garages. *Residential Design Guidelines*
3. New outbuildings, such as garages, should be clearly subordinate to the main structure in massing, and should utilize forms, materials and details which are similar to the main structure. *Residential Design Guidelines*
4. Minimize the mass of garages. *Residential Design Guidelines*

### Pedestrian Scale Development

1. Designs adapted to a human and pedestrian scale rather than to an automobile scale. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
2. Relate architectural focal point elements to pedestrian scale rather than automobile scale. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
3. Design all projects with a strong commitment to human scale. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
4. Accommodate auto oriented uses while maintaining a high degree of human scale and appeal. *Commercial Design Guidelines*

### Compatibility with Adjacent Properties

1. Projects backing up to residential neighborhoods should be sensitive to their potential impacts on the residents. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
2. Scale and character appropriate to the setting *Commercial Design Guidelines*
3. Break overall building masses into segments similar to those of nearby structures and parcels. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
4. Maintain a building scale and character sympathetic to the adjacent residential neighborhood. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
5. Design with a scale consistent with residential architecture in Los Gatos. *Commercial Design Guidelines*

6. Encourage commercial development that is sensitive to adjacent residential neighborhoods. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
7. Require that the scale and massing of new developments provide transitions in building height and massing to the physical and visual character of adjoining neighborhoods. *GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral*
8. Relate a structure's size and bulk to those in the immediate neighborhood. *Residential Design Guidelines*
9. Design two story houses in predominantly one story neighborhoods to blend with the smaller homes. *Residential Design Guidelines*
10. Design home entries that are sympathetic to others in the neighborhood. *Residential Design Guidelines*
11. Design with sensitivity to adjacent neighbors. *Residential Design Guidelines*
12. Height and bulk at front and side setbacks. *Residential Design Guidelines*

## Site-Specific Compatibility Guidelines

1. Strongly consider residential building forms for projects on the west side of North Santa Cruz Avenue where there is a close proximity to a residential neighborhood. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
2. Maintain a building scale and character sympathetic to the existing fabric of the CBD *Commercial Design Guidelines*
3. Recognize the special scale and character of unique subareas within the CBD *Commercial Design Guidelines*
4. Maintain existing compatibility and consistency amongst existing historic development and new development by ensuring adjacent structures are compatible in scale and massing. *GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral*
5. Require medium density, high density, and mixed-use parcels in the Los Gatos Boulevard District adjacent to Single-Family parcels to include increased site setbacks and multi-story step backs to minimize the impact and increase compatibility with smaller adjacent structures. *GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral*

## Strategies for Compatibility

1. For projects located on corner parcels of streets leading into residential neighborhoods, special attention should be given to the following: *Commercial Design Guidelines*

- Breaking building forms into modules that are similar to those in the residential neighborhoods
- Providing landscaping and landscape elements (e.g., fencing) that would be consistent with those used in residential areas
- Screening any parking areas with low walls and landscaping

2. Any buildings taller than two stories should have floors above the second floor set back from the walls below. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
3. Provide size transitions between larger and smaller buildings. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
4. Require new structures, remodels, landscapes, and hardscapes be designed to be architecturally consistent and similar in mass and scale with adjacent development to minimize compatibility issues. *GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral*
5. Avoid structures with height and bulk at front and side setback lines which are significantly greater than those of the adjacent homes *Residential Design Guidelines*
6. Locate second floor mass to minimize impacts on the streetscape and adjacent neighbors *Residential Design Guidelines*
7. Give special attention to adapting to the height and massing of adjacent homes. Avoid tall, unbroken front facades when other nearby homes have more articulated front facades with horizontal wall plane changes. *Residential Design Guidelines*
8. Take care in the placement of second floor masses. Unless the architectural style traditionally has the second floor front wall at or near the first floor wall, set the second floor back from the front facade a minimum of 5 feet. *Residential Design Guidelines*
9. The design of two story homes constructed adjacent to one story houses should include techniques to minimize their visual impact and provide transitions in scale. Some techniques include: *Residential Design Guidelines*
    - Step down to one story elements near the side setbacks
    - Provide substantial side setbacks for the entire house
    - Provide substantial second floor side setbacks
    - Use hip roofs at the sides rather than gables
10. Avoid monumental scaled forms (e.g., towers or turrets) that contrast with the neighborhood architectural forms. *Residential Design Guidelines*

## Hillside Development

1. Buildings shall be designed to minimize bulk, mass and volume so as not to be prominently visible from a distance or from surrounding properties. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
2. Buildings shall be designed to conform to the natural topography of the site and run with the contours. Blending with the existing terrain reduces the appearance of bulk. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
3. The building design should incorporate but not be limited to, the following techniques to effectively reduce the appearance of mass, bulk and volume: *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
    a. Keep building forms simple.
    b. Avoid architectural styles that are inherently viewed as massive and bulky.
    c. Minimize square footage.
    d. Minimize volume; avoid large volume buildings.
    e. Avoid overhanging decks, large staircases and patios formed by retaining walls that make buildings appear more massive. Avoid use of balustrades and solid wall railings that add to the mass of the design. (Revised 2/22/05 by Council Resolution 2005-11) Step the building foundation and roofs with the natural slope.
    f. Use horizontal and vertical building components to reduce bulk. Avoid two story wall planes.
    g. Create light and shadow by providing modest overhangs, projections, alcoves, and
    h. plane offsets, and varying elevations such as stepping second stories.
    i. Vary elevations, such as stepping back second stories, to conform with topography.
    j. 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.
    k. Use vaulted ceilings rather than high walls and ceilings with attics above to achieve a feeling of volume.
    l. Second stories should be stepped back so the difference in wall planes is visible from a distance. (Revised 2/22/05 by Council Resolution 2005-11)

4. The use of architectural features that increase visual prominence should be avoided. Massive, tall elements, such as two-story entries, turrets, and large chimneys should be avoided. Such elements on the downhill facade of the house is of particular concern. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*

### AHOZ

1. "Eliminate box-like forms with large, unvaried roofs by using a variety of building forms and roof shapes with cluster units, variations in height, setback, and roof shape. *Los Gatos AHOZ Design Guidelines*
2. "Construct a maximum of 6 attached units in a row. Approval of more than 6 attached units may be considered, but will only be granted for projects with extraordinary high design quality. " *Los Gatos AHOZ Design Guidelines*
3. "Elevations shall be mixed within a development to avoid repetition of identical facades and rooflines." *Los Gatos AHOZ Design Guidelines*

## 4. ROOF DESIGN (29 Issues in COMMITTEE REVIEW tab)

### General

1. Provide varied building and parapet heights except in locations where flat parapets are common *Commercial Design Guidelines*
2. Avoid buildings with flat parapet tops *Commercial Design Guidelines*
3. Sloped roof forms are encouraged. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
4. Avoid the use of tall towers or turrets unless they are integral to the architectural style *Residential Design Guidelines*
5. Avoid the use of too many active building forms added to the mass of the building. An excessive use of roof forms is a common problem. *Residential Design Guidelines*
6. Relate roof overhangs to the architectural style and to the surrounding neighborhood *Residential Design Guidelines*

### Roof Design Strategies

1. Finish wall tops with overhangs, projecting cornices, and column caps that provide a strong visual terminus to the structure. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
2. Use applied and integrated design elements (e.g., exposed rafter tails on sloped roofs, cornice moldings, applied medallions). *Commercial Design Guidelines*

3. Keep the size of roof fascias small. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
4. Use sloping roof forms with substantial overhangs *Commercial Design Guidelines*
5. Large roofs should be concealed behind parapets or wall elements with cornices unless a typical element of the architectural style. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
6. Utilize sloped roof forms *Commercial Design Guidelines*
7. Strongly consider the use of sloped roofs to relate to the adjacent residential neighborhoods. This applies to gas service stations as well as other commercial structures. *Commercial Design Guidelines*
8. Utilize roof forms and pitches similar to those in the immediate neighborhood *Residential Design Guidelines*
9. Use roof forms and pitches that are similar to other houses in the neighborhood *Residential Design Guidelines*
10. Unify roof pitches *Residential Design Guidelines*
11. Roof slopes for porches may be lower than the primary roof slope, depending on the architectural style. *Residential Design Guidelines*
12. Dormer roof slopes may sometimes be steeper than the primary roof slope, depending on the architectural style. *Residential Design Guidelines*
13. Roof flashing and vents: Paint flashing and vents to match the color of the roof. *Residential Design Guidelines*
14. Skylights: Use flat profile skylights rather than domed models *Residential Design Guidelines*
15. "Require roof forms to include materials, elevations, and finishes that are consistent with the architectural style and design of the structure." ***GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral***
16. "Encourage horizontal eaves longer than 40 to 50 feet in length be broken up by gables, building projections, or other forms of articulation ***GPAC Chair/Vice Chair Referral***

### Hillside Development

1. Roof skylights shall be tempered or have multi-layered glazing. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
2. Roof eaves should be designed with minimal overhang to prevent entrapment of heat and flames. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*

3. Roof forms and rooflines shall be broken into smaller building components to reflect the irregular forms of surrounding natural features. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
4. The slope of the main roof shall generally be oriented in the same direction as the natural slope of the terrain. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
5. Large gable ends on downhill elevations should be avoided. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
6. Skylight glazing material shall be selected to reduce glare at night. Large skylights with dome-style glazing should be avoided. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*
7. Roofs shall be a dark earth tone color with a variety of shades of that color that blend with the environment. *Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines*