

The background of the slide is a light blue map of Los Gatos, showing a grid of streets and some green spaces. The map is oriented horizontally, with the main title centered over it.

# **Objective Standards for Development in Los Gatos**

**Community Meeting  
February 22, 2022**



# AGENDA

- Introduction
- Purpose of Objective Standards
- Development Topics for Objective Standards
- Community Questions and Comments
- Next Steps

# M-GROUP PROJECT TEAM



**Tom Ford**  
Principal



**Damiere Powell**  
Senior Urban  
Designer



**Erin Tou**  
Associate Planner



**Sung Kwon**  
Principal Planner



**Christabel Soria Mendoza**  
Assistant Planner



# TIMELINE

➤ SPRING - FALL 2021 ➤ WINTER 2021-2022 ➤ SPRING 2022 ➤ SUMMER 2022

We are here!



Community Meeting #1



Community Meeting #2



Background Information & Preliminary Issues



Preliminary Objective Standards Development



Administrative Draft Objective Standards



Final Objective Standards Documentation



Subcommittee Meetings



Planning Commission Meeting



Town Council Hearing

REVIEW

# Objective Standards for Development in Los Gatos

An overview of information posted to the Town website

<https://www.losgatosca.gov/2729/Objective-Standards>

# PURPOSE OF OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

Establish objective criteria as a tool for the streamlined and ministerial review process

- Comply with recent State housing legislation
- Achieve intent of the Town's planning documents and enhance community character
- Provide objective criteria for the review of multi-family residential and mixed-use development projects
- Provide certainty to developers
- Respond to demand for multi-family housing

# ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Projects that are eligible for streamlined review processes include:

- Multi-family housing projects (minimum of 2 units)
- Mixed-use projects (including residential uses)



Multifamily development (meeting affordability requirements)

Source: M-Group



Mixed-use project (includes residential)

Source: <https://elp-inc.com/newark-approves-16th-avenue-mixed-use-building-through-redevelopment-plan/>

## **SB 167 Housing Accountability Act**

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Local government may not deny, reduce density, or make infeasible housing projects *consistent with objective design standards*

## **SB 35**

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Requires approval of qualified housing projects based on *objective regulatory standards*

## **SB 330 Housing Crisis Act**

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Prohibits imposing or enforcing new design standards established on or after January 1, 2020, that *are not objective*



A light blue background featuring a faint, stylized map of a city grid with streets and blocks.

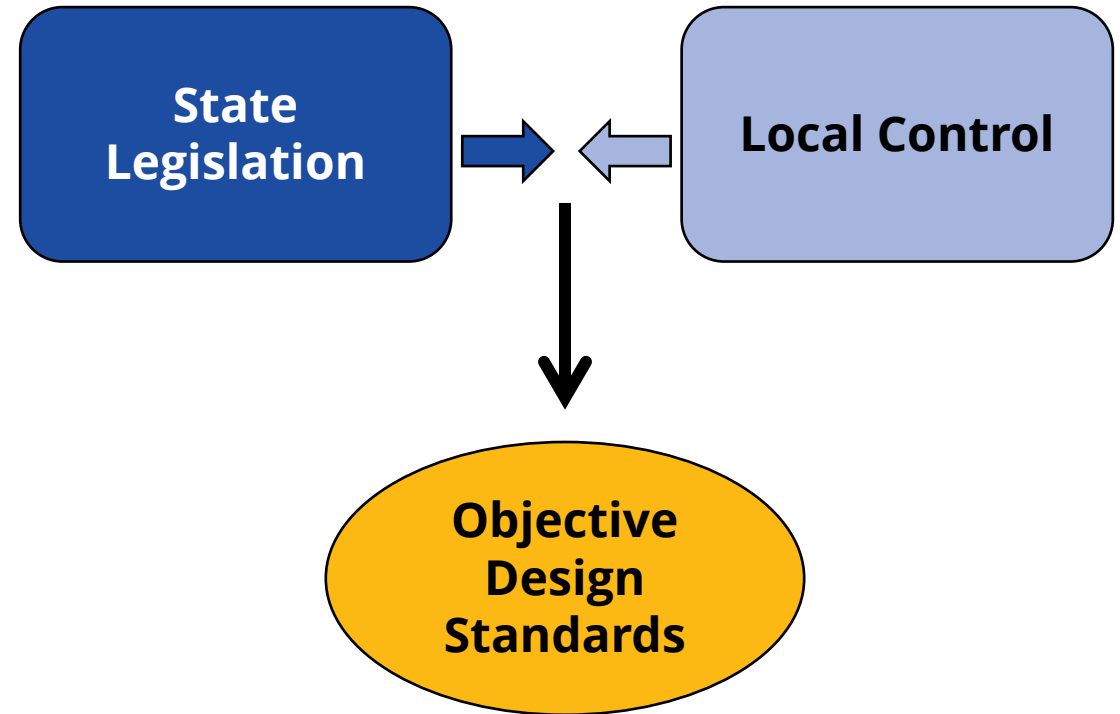
## WHAT ARE OBJECTIVE STANDARDS?

“standards that involve **no personal or subjective judgment** by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant or proponent and the public official prior to submittal.”

(California Government Code, Section 65913.4)

# OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

- Objective standards are a powerful toolkit that allow communities to respond to State housing laws that are reducing local control over development
- Provide an opportunity to ensure that the appearance of new development is compatible with the Town's vision



# DISCRETIONARY VS. MINISTERIAL REVIEW

## DISCRETIONARY REVIEW

- Project undergoes design review
- Qualitative judgement and review by Town staff and reviewing bodies
- Reviewing bodies determine the project's compliance with **design guidelines**

## MINISTERIAL REVIEW

- Streamlined review by Town staff
- Removes personal or subjective judgement
- Consistency with **objective design standards** is primary tool for project review

# DESIGN GUIDELINES VS. OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

## Design Guidelines

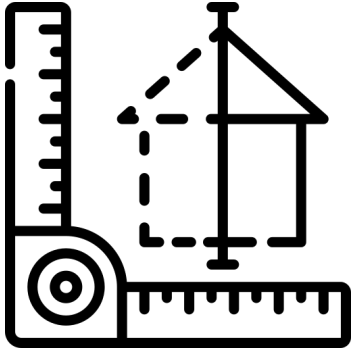
- Subjective
- Recommendations (not enforceable)
- Unmeasurable and difficult to interpret

## Objective Standards

- Supplement Design Guidelines
- Streamlined Review
- Measurable, quantifiable, easily defined, and enforceable

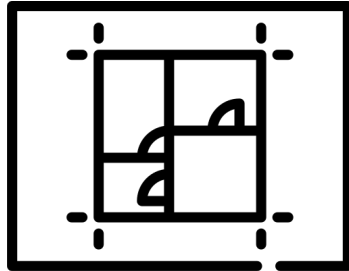


# TOOLS FOR OBJECTIVE STANDARDS



## Counts and Measurements

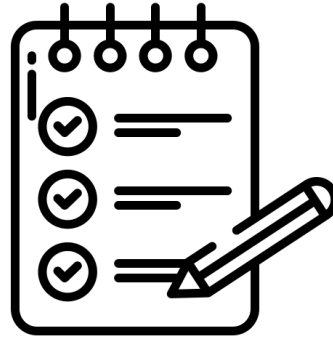
*Height*  
*Distances*  
*Setbacks*



**1:100**

## Ratios

*Roof Pitch*  
*Step Back Ratio*



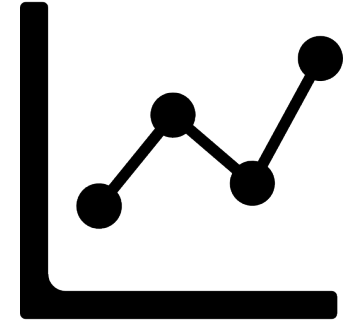
## Checklists

*Checklist of required architectural features*



## Scorecards

*Minimum total of combined scores for eligible design treatment*



## Performance Measures and Benchmarks

*Minimum amount of open space provided*

# DESIGN GUIDELINES VS. OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

## Design Guideline

“Minimize the visual mass and bulk of the structures.”



**SUBJECTIVE**



**OBJECTIVE**

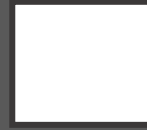
*Town of Los Gatos*

*Affordable Housing Overlay Zone Design Guidelines*

# DESIGN GUIDELINES VS. OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

## Objective Standard

“Provide a mix of one- and two-story masses or set the second floor back from the first-floor walls by a minimum of 5 feet for at least 50 percent of the façade of the structure.”



**SUBJECTIVE**



**OBJECTIVE**

*Town of Los Gatos*

*Affordable Housing Overlay Zone Design Standards*

# DESIGN GUIDELINES VS. OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

“Pedestrian links **should** be provided between buildings, common open spaces, and parking areas”



**SUBJECTIVE**



**OBJECTIVE**

*Town of Los Gatos  
North 40 Specific Plan*



# DESIGN GUIDELINES VS. OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

## Potential Objective Standard to Address Subjective Guidance

All structures, entries, facilities, amenities, and parking areas **shall** be internally connected with pedestrian pathways.



Internally connected pedestrian paths

Source: <https://www.elevatetosequoia.com/apartments/ca/antioch/cross-pointe-apartment-homes/>



**SUBJECTIVE**



**OBJECTIVE**

# DESIGN GUIDELINES VS. OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

“Promote well defined architectural styles through the use of building massing, setbacks, façade articulation, fenestration, varied parapets, and other human-scaled architectural features.”

*Town of Los Gatos General Plan Update Process*



Architectural features

Source: <https://www.apartments.com/the-bowery-at-southside-fort-worth-tx/0yrv312/>



**SUBJECTIVE**



**OBJECTIVE**

# DESIGN GUIDELINES VS. OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

## Potential Objective Standard to Address Subjective Guidance

Articulate all building facades facing a street or public open space for at least 80 percent of the façade length. Façade articulation can be achieved with the following:

- Material changes across the facade
- Bays with a minimum depth of 2 feet
- A plane change of at least 2 feet
- A change in window patterns

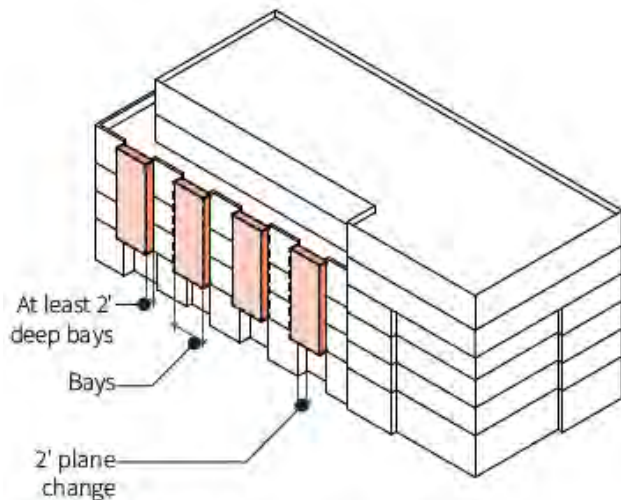


Fig. 3.24 Façade articulation using bays.

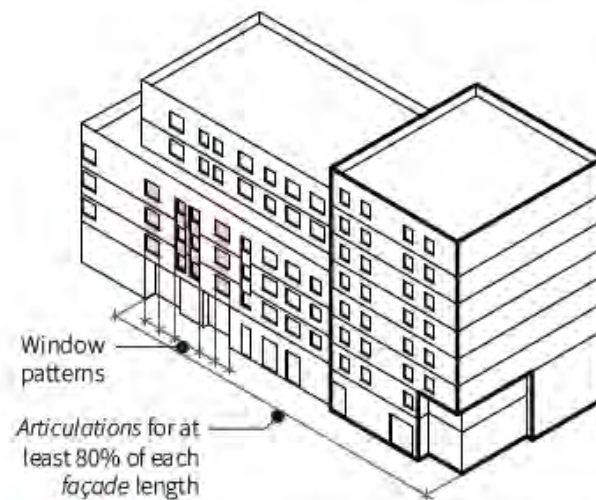


Fig. 3.25 Height articulation using corner elements and window patterns.



**SUBJECTIVE**



**OBJECTIVE**

### Façade articulation

Source: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/69148/637520903552430000>



# TOWN PLANNING AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

- Residential Design Guidelines
  - North 40 Specific Plan
  - AHOZ Design Guidelines
- Commercial Design Guidelines
  - Los Gatos Zoning Code
- Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines
  - GPAC Input

*The Town will continue to use these documents as part of a discretionary review process*



## Site Design

- Building Placement
- Open Space
- Landscaping and Screening
- Pedestrian Access
- Parking Location and Design
- Parking Structure Design
- Utilities

## Building Design

- Building Height
- Massing and Scale
- Roof Design
- Façade Design and Articulation

## Development Issues

- Visual continuity and streetscapes defined by buildings
- Transitions in height, scale, or development intensity



**Building Placement**  
(Source: multifamilyexecutive.com)

This example is for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how similar building placement along front setback areas may provide visual cohesion along the streetscape. Building placement may be different from this image to meet the development character of the Town of Los Gatos.

## Development Issues

- Enhanced pedestrian realm
- Common open spaces
- Private open spaces that give individual units access to light, air, and private outdoor areas
- A reduction in impervious surface area



**Common Open Space**  
(Source: multifamilyexecutive.com)

This example is for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how common open space may be incorporated into the site design. Common open spaces may be different from this image to meet the development character of the Town of Los Gatos.



## Development Issues

- Enhanced landscaping along street and front setbacks
- Greater privacy between neighboring properties
- Attractive screening of service and parking areas, utilities, and vehicular access areas
- Fencing and retaining walls that are appropriately scaled, and cohesive with the building



Streetscape Landscaping  
(Source: multifamilyexecutive.com)

This example is for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how the streetscape and site landscaping may be used to enhance and provide visual continuity along front setback areas. Landscaping and buildings may be different from this image to meet the development character of the Town of Los Gatos.

## Development Issues

- Connectivity to the public sidewalk
- Internal connectivity between all structures, entries, facilities, amenities, and parking areas
- Safe pedestrian walkways in parking and vehicular access areas



**Pedestrian Access**  
(Source: Los Gatos North 40 Specific Plan)

This example is for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how pedestrian access may be provided. Pedestrian access may be different from this image to meet the development character of the Town of Los Gatos.



## Development Issues

- Mitigation of visual impact of surface parking lots on public rights-of-way
- Reduced paving area and increased landscaping
- Bicycle parking with convenient access to buildings



**Parking Location and Design**  
(Source: Los Gatos North 40 Specific Plan)

This example is for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how parking areas may incorporate landscaping that screens and enhances the parking area. Parking areas may be different from this image to meet the development character of the Town of Los Gatos.

## Development Issues

- Mitigation of the visual impact of parking structure facades on public rights-of-way
- Enhanced parking structure facades that are developed with architectural features and articulation



**Parking Structure Design**  
(Source: Los Gatos AHOZ Design Guidelines)

This example is for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how a parking structure may be integrated into the building composition. The structure's design may be different from this image to meet the development character of the Town of Los Gatos.



## Development Issues

- Lighting for the safety and visibility of pedestrian and common areas
- Avoid lighting glare, light pollution, or spillover onto neighbors
- Utilities blend in and integrated into the building form and design
- Location and screening requirements that reduce the visual impact of utility and service areas



Utilities

(Source: Los Gatos North 40 Specific Plan)

This example is for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how utilities may be designed and screened to incorporate similar architectural features as the building to establish uniformity in design. The utility screening may be different from this image to meet the development character of the Town of Los Gatos.

## Development Issues

Promote appropriate building height transitions between buildings on adjacent properties or building additions with substantially differing building heights





## Development Issues

- Transitions in building bulk and mass between adjacent properties
- Modulation of bulk and box-like buildings with architectural features



Building Modulation

(Source: Baxter Apartments, Oakland, CA bizjournals.com)

This example is for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how a building may be modulated to reduce the appearance of bulk and mass. Buildings and massing methods may be different from this image to meet the development character of the Town of Los Gatos.



## Development Issues

- Provide enhanced architectural features or details
- Reduce appearance of box-like structures.



Roof Design  
(Source: [cambridgehomeloan.com](http://cambridgehomeloan.com))

This example is for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how a building may incorporate different roof features and designs to reduce the appearance of box-like structures. Buildings and roof design methods may be different from this image to meet the development character of the Town of Los Gatos.

# FAÇADE DESIGN AND ARTICULATION

## Development Issues

- Articulated facades
- Minimize or prohibit blank facades
- Provide a base, middle, and top of the building
- Reduce appearance of mass
- Provide pedestrian scale design and transparency at ground floor
- Weather protection for pedestrians
- Reduce visual impact of garages



**Facade Oriented Towards Streets**  
(Source: tylerchesser.com)

This example is for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how the building facade may be oriented towards the street with entrances, windows, balconies, and other architectural features along the street. Buildings and facade design may be different from this image to meet the development character of the Town of Los Gatos.

# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

## Site Design

- Building Placement
- Open Space
- Landscaping and Screening
- Pedestrian Access
- Parking Location and Design
- Parking Structure Design
- Utilities

## Building Design

- Building Height
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A light blue background on the left side of the slide features a faint, stylized map of a town grid with streets and a river. The text 'NEXT STEPS' is overlaid on this background in a bold, dark blue font.

## NEXT STEPS

- Preparation of Draft Objective Standards
- Community Meeting #2
- Revisions in coordination with Town staff
- Adoption Process



**Thank you!**

# **Objective Standards for Development in Los Gatos**

**Community Meeting  
February 22, 2022**