

Town of Los Altos Hills
Planning Commission Regular Meeting
August 07, 2025, Minutes

Zoom Meeting, Council Chambers at Town Hall, 26379 Fremont Road, Los Altos Hills, CA 94022
and C/4 '399', Opp Nehru Foundation, Bodakdev Ahmedabad 380054 Gujarat India

1. ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Indaco called the August 07, 2025, Planning Commission Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Bredo, Commissioner Couperus, Commissioner Patel, Vice-Chair Waschura, Chair Indaco

Absent: none

Staff: Community Development Director (CDD) Bradford, Assistant City Attorney Lai, Senior Planner Fox, Administrative Clerk/Technician Ahumada, Assistant Administrative Clerk/Technician Brunner

2. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Chair Indaco opened PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FLOOR.

No comments.

Chair Patel closed PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

~~3.1 Approval of May 1st, 2025, Regular Meeting Draft Minutes~~

~~3.2 Approval of June 5th, 2025, Regular Meeting Draft Minutes~~

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings are specially noticed items for discussion. Anyone wishing to speak regarding a public hearing should fill out a speaker card prior to the completion of the staff report and give it to staff. The order of business for public hearings is as follows:

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| 1. Staff Presentation | 4. Public Comments - 3 Minutes per person |
| 2. Applicant Presentation - 15 Minutes | 5. Applicant Response - 5 Minutes |
| 3. Commission Questions/Clarifications | 6. Commission Comments/Questions/Action |

If you challenge the proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described below, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Any interested party may appeal a determination of the Planning Commission to the City Council by filing a written notice of appeal with the City Clerk within twenty-two (22) days of the decision. A nonrefundable filing fee and a deposit for services shall accompany each notice of appeal, except that any member of the Council may file such an appeal without payment of a fee.

ex parte:

4.1 [Discussion on Modifications to the Town's Story Pole Policy per Housing Element Program B-16 to streamline the Story Pole Requirement or Allow Alternatives in Lieu of Story Poles](#)

Staff: Senior Planner Fox

4.2 [Discussion and Direction on Amendments to the Adopted 6th Cycle Housing Element and Land Use and Creation of Multi-Use Family Zoning and Objective Design Standards](#)

Review and discuss Michael Baker International's presentation of the Housing Element's Multi-Family Zone and Objective Design Standards.

CEQA Review: Consider exemption pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act CEQA Guideline Section 15061 (B)(3)

Staff: Director Bradford

Chair Indaco introduced Item 4.2.

Director Bradford introduced Dan Wery, from Michael Baker International, to present the staff report on Multi-Family Zones, Objective Design Standards, and the Housing Element and Land Use Amendments.

Mr. Wery began his presentation with Multi-Family Zones 5th draft revisions.

Commissioner Couperus asked a question about a zoning code and the change in the setback from the creeks.

Vice-Chair Waschura noted that the document was in the packet.

Mr. Wery continued his presentation on the revisions to the Multi-Family Zones and noted the latest amendments to the Housing Element and Land Use Element.

A question-and-answer session between the Commissioners, staff, and Dan Wery ensued at the conclusion of the presentation.

Assistant City Attorney Lai assisted with making clarifying changes to the language.

Commissioner Waschura commented on the definitions of hilltops, ridgelines, and creeks.

Chair Indaco commented that some of the terms were placeholders in lieu of having a specific map at this point, because that could be a much longer and more arduous process. It was better to have something there, so we don't forget about them.

A discussion on the terms "ridgeline", "hilltop", and "creek" ensued between the Commissioners.

Chair Indaco asked City Attorney Lai for clarification on including placeholder language.

Discussion on the terms "ridgeline", "hilltop", and "creek" continued amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner Patel, attending remotely, stated that defining hilltops, ridgelines, and creeks was very difficult. To simplify, he suggested limiting the discussion to multifamily housing projects of 20–24 units. He proposed that when the Town selected

sites for those projects, the Town should also be responsible for identifying and defining hilltops, ridgelines, and creeks on those sites at the time of selection. Once defined during site selection, no further definitions or debate would be needed.

Director Bradford shared a map from Valley Water and provided comments.

Commissioner Couperus provided comments that certain “creeks” were man-made as a result of the construction of Hwy 280. He also noted that those areas were on CalTrans property.

Vice Chair Waschura shared his preference regarding using the map shared by Director Bradford versus using the current definitions.

Commissioner Patel stated that, in his view, none of the three current sites contain hilltops or ridgelines, and only the Foothill site included a creek. He noted that if there was agreement on this, it would confirm consensus on the suitability of the three sites.

Chair Indaco asked about Objective Design Standards for future planning commissions.

Day Wery shared an elevation map to illustrate his comments to the Commission.

Public Comment

Sue Welch provided comment on the term "creek." She shared an idea which should simplify the issues, which was to ask the Army Corps of Engineers to approve the delineation of a property. They were free. She also noted that none of the agencies use maps; they go out and see what is happening on the ground. She noted that the smaller tributaries were critical to the watershed.

A discussion regarding the terminology of creeks between the Commissioners, Sue Welch, Dan Wery, City Attorney Lai, and staff ensued.

Anita Baldwin, with the Open Space Committee, wanted to make sure those tiny areas that were not always seen as creeks were counted.

Carol Gottlieb requested, after much commission discussion, that if they remove the definition of a ridgeline, that they also put in place something that would not allow a structure to be more than 19ft high.

Reva Konduru, attending via Zoom, asked about commenting on a different item on the agenda, which was not currently being discussed.

Commissioner Patel, attending via Zoom, commented that, based on the discussion, there appear to be two components to address. First was the need for clear definitions within the objective design standards, particularly as they relate to waterways. Second was the application process for multifamily housing developments. As part of that process, there could be a requirement, like the Fire Department review, for consultation or review by relevant agencies, such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, or others as appropriate.

Commissioner Patel noted that this issue may require both definitional standards and procedural requirements within the application process.

Chair Indaco commented that the objective design standards would address the issue if the necessary definitions were included and noted that the application process was governed by state law and legal requirements, which may limit local options.

Vice-Chair Waschura commented that it would be worthwhile to confirm with staff if there would be a process to evaluate a property and determine whether additional review is warranted.

Director Bradford stated that, based on the City Attorney's earlier comments, that would be the process they would look to maintain.

Vice-Chair Waschura stated that, given existing protections under other agencies' authority, he would be comfortable removing the definitions of "hilltop" and "ridge line," retaining the definition of "creeks," and possibly updating it with more recent information. He also noted that using the jurisdictional waters definition prepared by Mr. Wery could be sufficient and would protect the property containing creeks.

Commissioner Bredo noted she would like to retain a placeholder related to ridgelines, to allow for an updated definition establishing a setback for multifamily development. She supported keeping and improving existing provisions rather than removing them entirely, agreed with retaining the creek definition, and recommended including a requirement for review or designation by an external agency, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or a similar body, as part of the process.

Vice-Chair Waschura asked Attorney Lai a question and her response made the Commission ask another question for clarification.

A discussion between Vice-Chair Waschura and Commissioner Bredo ensued regarding what language to include or leave out.

Chair Indaco noted the text was sufficient and suggested they remove the images, which were confusing to her, and enhance the waterways and riparian resources definitions.

Director Bradford reminded the Commissioners that this meeting was the last opportunity for revisions prior to making recommendations to the City Council.

Commissioner Couperus noted that waterways were subject to independent agencies that defined waterways, and the Town had authority to establish development setbacks from them. Regarding ridgelines and hilltops, he supported removing formal definitions but recommended including a cautionary statement indicating that projects may be subject to visual or other limitations related to ridgelines and hilltops.

Chair Indaco responded that the document already addressed these three areas consistently and that there was agreement on setback distances; however, she was in favor of leaving in the current definitions.

Carol Gottlieb made a suggestion to the Commission regarding the definition of a ridgeline.

Vice-Chair Waschura asked if the ridgeline-related provisions were removed from the multifamily standards, would upcoming RA zoning changes addressing ridgelines govern development in those areas.

City Attorney Lai responded that it would only apply to RA [zoning]; not multi-family [zoning].

A discussion ensued between the Commissioners and the City Attorney regarding RA and Multi-Family Zoning provisions, with a focus on development on ridgelines and hilltops.

(~8:13pm)

Elizabeth Loinaz, attending via Zoom, supported keeping the definitions and removing the pictures. She recommended measuring elevation from the nearest valley or local minimum, rather than from streets on ridgelines, to better reflect local geography (e.g., measuring from Fremont Road to the peak of La Cresta). As an alternative, she suggested referencing RA zone standards for ridgelines, noting both approaches would be more objective.

Discussion about the definition of a valley ensued.

Chair Indaco recapped they would keep.

Commissioner Bredo noted her requests for updates on Multi-Family Development Standards.

Chair Indaco noted there would be a break at 9PM.

Discussion on what changes to make ensued.

Director Bradford asked if there was a maximum height for a monument they would like to see maintained.

The Commissioners agreed to 6ft. at the maximum height for the monument.

The meeting recessed at 854pm.

The meeting resumed at 9:04pm.

Chair Indaco closed the PUBLIC COMMENTS.

Commission Discussion

Discussion about the Housing Element revisions ensued.

Discussion about the Land Use revisions ensued.

Vice-Chair Waschura and **Chair Indaco** thanked the staff and Dan.

Commissioner Patel asked about next steps.

Director Bradford outlined the next steps to the Commissioners.

Vice-Chair Waschura confirmed with Director Bradford that the Housing Element Amendment was going directly to HCD and he confirmed, outlining those next steps.

Commissioner Couperus noted a photo of his was used in a report.

Chair Indaco also thanked the Town volunteers for their input and efforts.

Commissioner Patel provided one more comment.

No motion.

5. REPORTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

5.1. Upcoming City Council Meeting Assignments

- September 18, 2025 – Commissioner Couperus
- October 16, 2025 – Commissioner Bredo
- November 20, 2025 – Commissioner Patel

Chair Indaco confirmed upcoming meeting assignments.

6. REPORTS FROM PAST FAST TRACK/SITE DEVELOPMENT MEETINGS

6.1 July 29, 2025
CANCELLED

6.2 August 5, 2025
CANCELLED

7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Bradford introduced Senior Planner Fox to provide an update on the activities of the CDD intern, Victor Vu.

Commissioner Couperus commented on an underground transformer installation that was not approved by the Planning Commission.

Senior Planner Fox presented a summary of the CDD intern, Victor Vu.

Director Bradford also highlighted the importance of Victor's contributions with the projects he completed during his internship.

The Commissioners commented.

Vice-Chair Waschura noted a resident on Viscaino has been contacting him, so requested Director Bradford to follow up with that.

Commissioner Patel asked about the status of the hiring for the CDD team.

Director Bradford provided an update.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The public meeting was adjourned at 10:02 PM by **Chair Indaco**.

Respectfully submitted,

Keren Brunner

Keren Brunner
Administrative Clerk/Technician