



## AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

**Meeting Date:** December 14, 2021

**Subject:** City Council resolution establishing objective residential site development and design standards pursuant to recent changes to state law; find project exempt from review under CEQA per CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15308.

**Prepared by:** Jia Liu, Associate Planner, AICP  
Erik Ramakrishnan, City Attorney's Office

**Reviewed by:** Gabriel Engeland, City Manager

**Attachment(s):**

- 1 – SB9 Implementation Resolution with Track Changes
- 2 – Plate Heights Approval through DRC in 2021
- 3 – SB 9 Implementation Resolution (Clean Version)

**Initiated by:**

The City Council due to recent changes to state law.

**Previous Council Consideration:**

- October 26, 2021 – City Attorney's Office provided a presentation on Senate Bill (SB) 9 to the City Council. The Council directed that the staff work with an ad hoc subcommittee of the Design Review Commission (DRC) to develop objective standards.
- November 9, 2021 – Staff provided updates on Single-Family Residential Objective Standards progress to the City Council.
- November 30, 2021 – Staff presented the recommended resolution including Single-Family Residential Objective Standards to the City Council. The Council continued the item to the December 14, 2021 Council Meeting with directions.

**Fiscal Impact:**

No fiscal impact. The initial effort will be undertaken by city staff. Additional residential objective standards could require assistance of consultants, which will have an undetermined fiscal impact.

**Environmental Review:**

The adoption of the resolution is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption) and 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for the Protection of the Environment), in that the regulations imposed by the resolution are intended to preserve scenic quality for the City of Los Altos by establishing design guidelines to protect the existing community character, and because



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it can be seen with certainty that the adoption of the regulations will not have a significant effect on the environment (or that any such effect is wholly speculative), and none of the circumstances in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies.

**Summary:**

Recent changes to state law require immediate attention prior to January 1, 2022 so that the City has in place appropriate site development and design standards governing the review of land division and certain residential development proposals to ensure these type of permits can be managed consistent with the city’s current practice.

**Staff Recommendation:**

City staff are recommending the City Council adopt the residential objective design standards (Attachment 3).

**Background**

On September 16, 2021, Governor Newsom signed SB 8, 9, and 10 and several other housing related pieces of legislation. Since more than 75% of Los Altos lands will be impacted by the new bills starting from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, after the October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 City Council Study Session, staff was directed to work with an ad hoc subcommittee of the DRC to develop the single-family objective design standards.

In a limited timeframe, through internal and cross-departmental discussions, staff used the adopted Residential Design Guidelines to prepare draft objective design standards based on the current practice through recent years. At the November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 DRC meeting, the ad hoc subcommittee was formed by two Commissioners who are architects. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the subcommittee reviewed the draft standards and proposed adjustments.

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, staff presented the recommended resolution with the residential objective design standards. The item was continued to the December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Council Meeting with direction.

**Modifications to Resolution**

The following updates were incorporated into the recommended resolution. Detailed modifications are provided in Attachment 1 – SB9 Implementation Resolution with Track Changes.

1. Add a recital to the resolution stating the intent of SB 9.



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2. Add a section to the main body of the resolution stating that other applicable codes apply to SB 9 projects, including building codes and ADU laws. Also add language to the main body of the resolution stating that the resolution should be construed consistently with state law.
3. Throughout the entire resolution, replace “to prevent an applicant from construction at least two, 800 square-foot single-family residential units with four-foot rear and side setbacks” with “if a housing development project allowed under SB9 is precluded”.
4. In Appendix D-1, Attachment 2 of the resolution:
  - A. Delete “Nothing herein is intended to prevent an applicant from constructing ADUs per the City’s ADU Ordinance and state law.” In Appendix D-1, Attachment 2.
  - B. Delete definition of “Earth Tone”.
  - C. Delete Section 2.F.c for the requirement of adjoining two units on one parcel.
  - D. Change “Off-street parking” to “parking” in Section 2.K.
  - E. Delete Section 3.F.e, f & g related to earth tone color requirements.
  - F. Add to Section 3.G.m that “all new utility services and relocated existing utility services are placed underground pursuant to Chapter 12.68 of Municipal Code”.
5. Add a reference to Appendix 3 in Paragraph 2 of Appendix 2 of the resolution.
6. Make other nonsubstantive, clarifying cleanups as directed by the City Council.

### **Discussion/Analysis**

The following items were deferred by the City Council to address during the next round in the development of objective residential standards:

1. Revisit proposed standards for plate heights, balconies, and exterior color. For Council’s consideration, and as directed by the City Council, staff collected the approved plate heights in 2021 through Design Review Commission public hearings in a tabular format provided in Attachment 2.
2. Propose an amendment to the Municipal Code to allow appeals of the objective standards to be heard by city staff or body other than the City Council.



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## Options

- 1) Adopt the updated Residential Objective Design Standards Resolution (Attachment 3).

**Advantages:** Allows the City to control development in single-family zone districts beginning on January 1, 2022, in light of SB 9 taking effect on this date.

**Disadvantages:** Although this is the result of recent State legislation regarding housing, it does remove the ability of the City to exercise its discretion in certain instances.

- 2) Remand the project back to city staff for additional edits and direct the item be brought back to the City Council at a later meeting.

**Advantages:** Provides additional time to further refine the residential objective zoning standards.

**Disadvantages:** Delays the adoption of these standards and they will not be in place prior to January 1, 2022.

## Recommendation

The staff recommends Option 1.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
ESTABLISHING OBJECTIVE STANDARDS FOR SINGLE FAMILY  
RESIDENCES TO IMPLEMENT SENATE BILL 9**

**WHEREAS**, on September 16, 2021, the Governor signed Senate Bill 9 (Stats. 2021, Ch. 162) (“SB 9”); and

**WHEREAS**, SB 9 allows for streamlined ministerial approval for certain residential dwelling units in single-family residential zones; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of SB 9 is to address California’s affordable housing crisis by promoting small-scale neighborhood residential development to provide for increased housing opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, SB 9 requires the City to apply objective design standards to residential dwelling units approved pursuant to the legislation and prohibits discretionary design review for such units; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Los Altos has adopted Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines (the “SFRDG”) pursuant to Section 14.76.020 of the Los Altos Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, to implement SB 9, it is necessary or convenient that the City Council amend the SFRDG to specify objective design criteria applicable to new single-family homes; and

**WHEREAS**, SB 9 allows cities to impose certain standards for projects approved under that legislation, which the City Council desires to adopt; and

**WHEREAS**, certain ambiguities in SB 9 require resolution pending guidance from the judiciary and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the City Council of the City of Los Altos, as follows:

1. Effective January 1, 2022, the SFRDG are hereby amended to include as APPENDIX D-1 thereof the objective single-family design guidelines (the “Objective Standards”) attached to this Resolution as **Appendix 1**. After January 1, 2022, applications to remodel existing single-family residences and applications to construct new single-family residences not subject to approval under SB 9 shall continue to be subject to the SFRDG. Applications to construct new single-family residences subject to approval under SB 9 shall comply with the Objective Standards. Applicants for projects subject to approval under SB 9 are strongly encouraged to comply with all provisions of the

SFRDG to ensure high quality design and neighborhood compatibility.

2. Nothing in this Resolution or its appendices is intended to preclude the application to SB 9 projects of: building codes, state and local rules with respect to accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units, or other laws generally applicable to housing development projects of one to four units.
3. As soon as practicable, Staff is directed to hold one or more study sessions with the Planning Commission and with the Design Review Commission to obtain feedback concerning the Objective Standards from both commissions and from the public. Relying on such feedback and the experience of Staff in implementing SB 9, Staff is hereby directed to return to the City Council no later than May 2022 to report on the implementation of SB 9 and to recommend any amendments to the Objective Standards.
4. SB 9 authorizes local agencies to impose certain standards and requirements outlined in **Appendix 2** to this Resolution. Those standards and requirements are hereby adopted, and the SFRDG is hereby amended to incorporate the standards as APPENDIX D-2 thereof.
5. SB 9 contains certain ambiguities that require interpretation. Pending further guidance from the Department of Housing and Community Development and the judiciary, Staff are hereby directed to follow the guidance included in the interpretive guidance document attached as **Appendix 3** to this Resolution.
6. The City Council hereby finds that the adoption of this Resolution is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption) and 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for the Protection of the Environment), in that the regulations hereby imposed are intended to preserve scenic quality for the City of Los Altos by establishing design guidelines to protect the existing community character, and because it can be seen with certainty that the adoption of the regulations hereby imposed will not have a significant effect on the environment (or that any such effect is wholly speculative), and none of the circumstances in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies.
7. In adopting this Resolution, the City Council intends that it be construed to be consistent with the state and federal constitutions and with applicable state housing laws, including SB 9. If any section, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Resolution (including its appendices), is, for any reason, held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions hereof.
8. Any person wishing to challenge the validity of any provision of this Resolution (including its appendices), whether facially or as applied, may, if aggrieved by such provision, appeal to the City Council pursuant to Chapter 1.12 of the Los Altos Municipal Code. As used herein, a person is “aggrieved” if, (a) a provision of this

Resolution would prevent the individual from seeking approval of a housing development project for which the individual would like to apply, and (b) in the opinion of the individual, the challenged provision is invalid or unconstitutional. If the City Council grants an appeal a facial challenge, then it shall direct staff to propose appropriate amendments to this Resolution, consistent with the City Council's decision on the appeal. If the City Council grants an as-applied challenge, then it may allow an exception to standards to the limited extent necessary to avoid the invalidity or unconstitutionality.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Los Altos at a meeting thereof on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

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Neysa Fligor, MAYOR

Attest:

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Andrea Chelemengos, MMC, CITY CLERK

**APPENDIX 1  
OBJECTIVE STANDARDS ADOPTED AS**

**APPENDIX D-1 TO THE SFRDG**

**Objective Standards for Single-Family Residential Zone**

It is intent that the following standards shall not be applied to preclude a housing development project allowed under SB 9 ~~to prevent an applicant from constructing at least two, 800 square foot single family residential units with four foot rear and side setbacks.~~ As used here, a residential dwelling unit includes living space only and not parking or accessory structures. ~~Nothing herein is intended to prevent an applicant from constructing ADUs per the City's ADU Ordinance and state law.~~

**1. Definition – any term not defined in this section has the meaning given in the City Municipal Code unless otherwise specified.**

“Secondary front lot line” means a lot line abutting a street which is not a front lot line.

“Plate height” means the vertical distance measured from the top of the finished floor to the top of the plates.

“Exterior finish” refers to the exterior façade of a house, excluding the roofs, trim, windows, doors, and shutters.

“Exterior trim” refers to the finish materials on the exterior of a building, such as moldings applied around openings (window trim, door trim), siding, windows, exterior doors, attic vents, and crawl space vents.

~~“Earth tone” means is a color that draws from a color palette of browns, tans, warm grays, greens, oranges, whites, and some blues. The colors in an earth tone scheme are muted and flat in an emulation of the natural colors found in dirt, moss, trees and rocks. Many earth tones originate from clay earth pigments, such as umber, ochre, and sienna. In case of doubt, the following definition shall be applied to determine whether a color is an earth tone: Earth tone means a color with a lightness (light reflective) value of 25 to 60 that is composed of a mixture of any shade of brown and any shade of any other color or colors.~~

“Lines of sight” means with a 60-degree angle beginning at the starting point, 30 degrees to the left and 30 degrees to the right in horizontal perspective.

“High-quality transit corridor” means corridor with fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than fifteen minutes during the morning and afternoon peak commute hours.

“Major transit stop” means a site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.



## 2. SB 9 – Development Standards

### A. Lot Split and Minimum Site Area

An existing parcel shall not be subdivided into more than two parcels. ~~One~~The smallest subdivided parcel shall not be less than forty percent (40%) of the original parcel, ~~and provided that~~ both newly subdivided parcels are each shall be no smaller than one thousand and two hundred (1,200) square feet.

### B. All development standards under Government Code Section 66411.7 are hereby adopted.

### C. Site Frontage and Site Width

- a. The minimum width of the access corridor for each flag lot shall be twenty (20) feet, and shall provide direct access to a public or private street.
- b. Easements for the provision of public services and facilities and egress and ingress are required.

### D. Coverage. The following coverage standards apply unless they would preclude a housing development project allowed under SB 9. two single family units with 4-foot rear and side yard setbacks and 800 square feet each in floor area are precluded.

- a. The maximum coverage for all structures in excess of six feet in height shall be thirty-five (35) percent of the total area of the site where the height of one-story development does not exceed twenty (20) feet.
- b. A minimum of fifty (50) percent of the required front yard area shall be a combination of pervious landscape material and landscape.
- c. On sites where the lot coverage exceeds thirty (30) percent, two-story structures shall not be allowed.

### E. Floor Area Ratio. The following coverage standards apply unless they would preclude a housing development project allowed under SB 9. two single family units with 4-foot rear and side yard setbacks and 800 square feet each in floor area are precluded.

- a. For lots with a net site area not exceeding eleven thousand (11,000) square feet, the maximum floor area shall be thirty-five (35) percent of the net ~~lot~~ site area.
- b. For lots with a net site area exceeding eleven thousand (11,000) square feet, the maximum floor area shall be three thousand eight hundred fifty (3,850) square feet plus ten (10) percent times the net ~~lot~~ site area minus eleven thousand (11,000) square feet.

### F. Setbacks.

- a. Except as noted below, the minimum setbacks shall be as follows:

<b>Front*</b>	
<b>First Story</b>	25 feet
<b>Second Story</b>	30 feet
<b>Secondary Front*</b>	
<b>First Story</b>	10 feet
<b>Second Story</b>	13 feet
<b>Side</b>	
<b>First Story</b>	<u>No less than</u> 4 feet. However, to reduce the privacy impacts to abutting property owners, applicants are encouraged to voluntarily increase the setbacks to be <u>at least</u> 10 feet from the side property lines.
<b>Second Story*</b>	<u>No less than</u> 11.5 feet. However, to reduce the privacy impacts to abutting property owners, applicants are encouraged to voluntarily increase the second story setback to be <u>at least</u> 17.5 feet from the side property lines.
<b>Rear</b>	<u>No less than</u> 4 feet. However, to reduce the privacy impacts to abutting property owners, applicants are encouraged to voluntarily increase the rear setback to be <u>at least</u> 10 feet from the rear property line.

- b. No architectural features (i.e. cantilevers, bay windows, and/or any other architectural projections) shall be allowed within the side and rear required setback areas except for 12-inch maximum eaves with four-inch maximum gutters.
- ~~c. When two primary single-family residential units are proposed on one parcel, the two units shall be attached and designed subject to Section 2 of this policy.~~
- c. Notwithstanding these rules, the applicant shall be allowed to construct within the dimensions of an existing legal building.

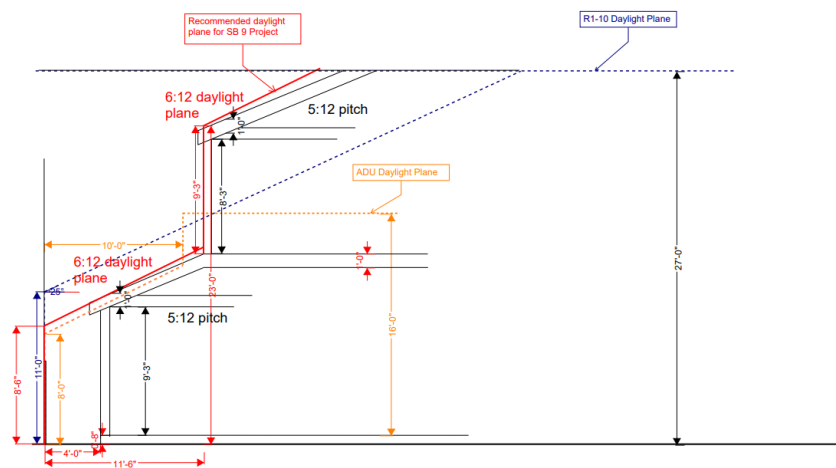
\*Unless ~~is two single-family units with 4-foot rear and side-yard setbacks and 800 square feet each in floor area~~ are a housing development project allowed under SB 9 is precluded.

**G. Height of Structures**

No structure shall exceed two stories or twenty-seven (27) feet in height from the natural grade. On flag lots the height of structures shall be limited to one story and twenty (20) feet in height. Basements shall not be considered a story. When the lot coverage exceeds or is proposed to exceed thirty (30) percent, the maximum height of structures shall be twenty (20) feet.

**H. Daylight Plane**

- a. No portion of any residential units shall extend above or beyond a daylight plane as follows unless a housing development project allowed under SB9 is precluded ~~two single-family units with 4-foot rear and side-yard setbacks and 800 square feet each in floor area are.~~
- b. The daylight plane starts at a height of eight feet and six inches (8'-6") at the property line and proceeds inward at 6:12 slope. At eleven feet and six inches from the property line, the daylight plane increases to twenty-three feet (23') and proceeds inward at 6:12 slope. All appurtenances, including chimneys, vents and antennas, shall be within the daylight plane. The daylight plane is not applied to a side or rear property line when it abuts a public alley or public street. ~~However, the daylight plane shall not be enforced if it prohibits two single-family units with 4-foot rear and side-yard setbacks and 800 square feet each in floor area.~~ Notwithstanding this requirement, the maximum required rear and side yard setback shall be four feet.



The daylight plane starts at a height of eight feet and six inches (8'-6") at the property line and proceeds inward at 6:12 slope. At eleven feet and six inches from the property line, the daylight plane increase to twenty three feet (23') and proceeds inward at 6:12 slope. All appurtenances, including chimneys, vents and antennas, shall be within the daylight plane. The daylight plane is not applied to a side or rear property line when it abuts a public alley or public street. ~~However, the daylight plane shall not be enforced if it prohibits two single-family units with 4-foot rear and side-yard setbacks and 800 square feet each in floor area .~~

**I. Basements.**

Basements shall be regulated as follows:

- a. Basements shall not extend beyond the floor area of the first floor of the main or accessory structure above;
- b. Light wells, ingress and egress wells, patio wells, and other similar elements shall not be permitted within a required setback yards.
- c. Light wells, ingress and egress wells, patio wells, and other similar elements shall utilize vertical retaining walls. Contour graded slopes, which expose the basement as a story, are prohibited.
- d. Light wells, ingress and egress wells, patio wells, and other similar elements shall be at least seventy-five (75) percent open in area to light and air above.

**J. Outdoor kitchen, barbeques, fireplaces and swimming pools.**

Outdoor kitchen barbeques, fireplaces, and swimming pools shall be subject to zoning standards of the underlying zoning district.

**K. Off-street Parking.**

- a. One covered parking for each unit with minimum dimensions of nine (9) feet in width and eighteen (18) feet in depth is required. Uncovered parking shall be allowed only to the extent necessary to facilitate the construction of two units at least that each is 800 square feet in size.
- b. No ~~off-street~~ parking is required in either of the following instances:
  - 1) The subject parcel is located within one-half mile walking distance of either a high-quality transit corridor or a major transit stop.
  - 2) A car share vehicle program is located within one block of the parcel.

**L. Signs.**

Signs shall be subject to zoning standards of the underlying zoning district.

**M. Fences.**

Fences shall be subject to zoning standards of the underlying zoning district.

**N. Nonconforming use regulations**

Corrections on nonconforming zoning conditions shall not be required for the ministerial approval of a parcel map application for the creation of a lot split pursuant to SB 9.

**O. Accessory Structures.**

Accessory structures shall be subject to zoning standards of the underlying zoning district.

**3. SB 9 – Objective Design Standards****A. Plate Heights.**

- a. Plate height is limited to 9'-3" for the first floor except for an entry porch may have a maximum plate height of 12' and a garage may have a maximum plate height of 10'.
- b. Plate height is limited to 8'-3" for the second floor.

**B. Second Floor Windows.**

Second floor windows shall be regulated as follows:

- a. On elevations that are facing interior side property lines, a minimum sill height of 4'-6" is required for all second-floor windows.
- b. On elevations that are facing rear property lines adjacent to a neighboring property, a minimum sill height of the California Building Code (CBC) minimum required sill height for egress or light and ventilation shall be provided.
- c. For any windows within ten feet of rear or interior side property lines adjacent to a neighboring property, the maximum second story window size shall be no larger than the CBC minimum required size.

**C. Balcony and Rooftop Deck.**

Balconies and rooftop decks shall be regulated as follows:

- a. ~~Balconies~~ **Balconies** and/or roof decks are prohibited when facing interior side yards and rear yard adjacent to a neighboring property.
- b. A balcony or a roof deck is allowed only on front elevations facing public and private streets; and a minimum of twenty-five (25) feet side setback shall be provided from the side property lines to the edge of the balcony or roof deck.
- c. The maximum depth for any balconies and rooftop decks shall be four (4) feet.
- d. The maximum size for any balconies and rooftop decks shall be 25 square feet.
- e. Screening devices shall include solid railing walls instead of open railings, and latticework above the required railing height to obscure sight lines from a balcony or a roof deck.

**D. Screening Vegetation.**

Screening vegetation shall be regulated as follows:

- a. Screening vegetation is required in either of the following situations:
  - 1) Within lines of sight for any proposed balcony and roof deck projected to any side property line, screening vegetation shall be planted.
  - 2) Within lines of sight from each jamb of any windows with a sill height of less than 4'-6" at second floor, screening vegetations shall be planted.
- b. Any required screening vegetation shall be evergreen species reaching to fifteen feet through twenty feet in height at their mature age with permanent irrigation and shall be maintained for the life of the project.
- c. At least twenty-four-inch (24-inch) box screening vegetation shall be planted prior to occupancy of the residence.

#### **E. Landscaping**

Onsite landscaping shall be regulated as follows:

- a. Trees selected from the [Street Tree Planting List](#) are required to be planted on site following the standards below:
  - 1) For lots five thousand (5,000) square feet in size or greater, at least two, Category II trees shall be planted with at least one, Category II tree planted in the front yard. For each additional five thousand (5,000) square-foot lot size, one more Category II tree shall be planted onsite.
  - 2) For lots with less than five thousand (5,000) square feet in size, at least one, Category II tree or two Category III trees shall be planted onsite.
  - 3) If there are existing trees onsite, an arborist report, prepared by an ISA certified arborist, may be required to determine the equivalent value of existing trees compared to the Street Tree Planting List.
- b. Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance (WELo) and its submittal requirements apply to the following projects:
  - 1) New construction projects with new or rebuilt landscape areas that exceed five hundred (500) square feet.
  - 2) Remodels and/or additions to existing single-family houses with new or rebuilt landscape areas that exceed ~~twenty-five thousand two thousand and five hundred~~ (2,500) square feet.

## F. Construction Materials and Colors.

All construction materials shall be long-term (30 years) durability and appearance, as per manufacture's specifications. Specifically, the construction materials shall be subject to the following:

- a. Foam trim with a painted stucco finish is prohibited throughout the structure(s).
- b. Mixing roof materials and colors are not allowed except for curved dormers and shed roof structures.
- c. Exterior finish including wainscoting used for one structure shall be no greater than three different materials. Each material may be a different color, but every part of exterior finish comprised of a single material shall be a single color.
- d. Window and door trims shall be limited to one material and one color. The material and color shall be the same for both windows and door trims.
- e. Architectural detailing shall be incorporated such as window and door trim, belly bands, cornices, shutters, column accents to the entry porch, and railings in an integrated composition. ~~No more than three distinct materials and colors shall be used.~~
- ~~f. Exterior finish shall be earth tones.~~
- ~~g. Exterior trim shall be in a shade of white, black, grey, brown, or an earth tone.~~

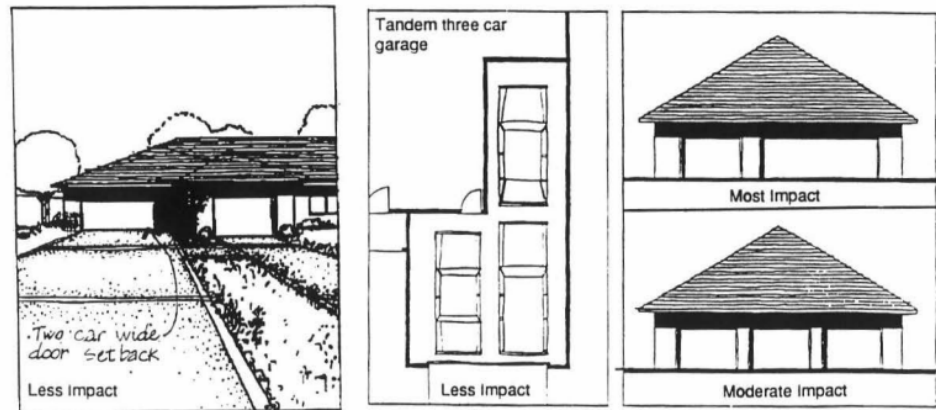
## G. Site and Building Design.

The site and building design shall be subject to the following standards to create visual variety and avoid a large-scale appearance:

- a. Driveway shall be designed per the following standards:
  - 1) Each property is prohibited from more than one curb cut or driveway accessing a street unless the subject site is fronting a City's Arterial or Collector road.
  - 2) A curb cut or driveway width connecting to a public or private street shall be no greater than twenty-two (22) feet.
  - 3) For corner lots, driveway connections shall be at least thirty (30) feet from the intersecting corner property lines at the street intersection.
  - 4) If the project impacts a street shoulder, then it shall be improved accordingly per City's Street Shoulder Improvement Policy.
- b. Façade articulation shall be provided with at least six corners on the first floor.

## ATTACHMENT 1

- c. Building entrances shall have a roofed projection (such as a porch) or recess with a minimum depth of at least five feet and a minimum horizontal area of thirty (30) square feet. Any corners within the building entrances shall not count as part of the corners as required above.
- d. Downspout shall be painted to match or accent the exterior finish color.
- e. Attached garage shall be subject to the following standards:
  - 1) Attached garage shall be recessed at least one foot from the front elevation wall plane of the residence.
  - 2) When a three-car attached garage is proposed, visual impact shall be reduced by, (i) using a tandem parking layout inside a two-car-wide garage; (ii) using three single-car-wide garage doors instead of a double and a single garage door; or (iii) setting back one of the doors from the others.



- f. Windows and doors shall either be trimmed or recessed.
  - 1) When trimmed, the trim material shall not be less than 3.5" in width by 3/4" in depth when protruding from the wall.
  - 2) When recessed, the building primary siding material shall cover the recessed edge faces and wrap toward the interior face of the window glazing or door face by not less than 2 inches in depth.
- g. The design of roof shall be regulated as follows:
  - 1) No more than two types of roof forms shall be used.
  - 2) No more than two roof pitches shall be used.
- h. First floor finished elevation shall be no more than twenty-two (22) inches above existing natural grade on a non-hillside lot. In a flood zone or flood way, the first-floor level may be set at the minimum allowed above grade to meet code requirements.



## ATTACHMENT 1

- i. For a hillside property, a stepped foundation is required where the average slope beneath the proposed structure is 10% or greater.
- j. No mechanical equipment shall be located in any required side and rear yards. The placement and operation of the mechanical equipment must be consistent with the City's Noise Ordinance.
- k. No exterior staircases above grade shall be allowed.
- l. Except for pathway lighting, outdoor lighting fixtures shall be downward facing and fully shielded or recessed.
- m. All new utility services and relocated existing utility services are placed underground pursuant to Chapter 12.68 of Municipal Code.

**APPENDIX 2**  
**STANDARDS ADOPTED PURSUANT TO SB 9 AS**  
**APPENDIX D-2 TO THE SFRDG**

- 1) **Objective Zoning/Subdivision/Design Standards.** SB 9 authorizes the City to impose objective zoning standards, objective subdivision standards, and objective design review standards applicable to structures and parcels created by an urban lot split that do not conflict with SB 9 or preclude the construction of two 800 square foot minimum primary dwelling units. Accordingly, all such existing objective City standards shall apply to SB 9 projects, in addition to any additional objective standards that the City may adopt.
- 2) **Maximum Units and Lots.** The City shall not approve more residential dwelling units or lots for any SB 9 project than required under state law, as set forth in Appendix 3 of City Council Resolution No. 21- .
- 3) **Parking.** SB 9 allows the City to choose to require parking consistent with the terms thereof. Accordingly, the City shall require off-street parking of one space per unit, unless the lot is located within one-half mile walking distance of either a high-quality transit corridor, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 21155 of the Public Resources Code, or a major transit stop, as defined in Section 21064.3 of the Public Resources Code, or unless there is a car share vehicle located within one block of the parcel.
- 4) **Setbacks.** SB 9 allows the City to choose to require setbacks consistent with the terms thereof. Accordingly, the City shall require setbacks of not less than four feet from the side and rear lot lines in all SB 9 projects, except as otherwise specified in SB 9.
- 5) **Applicant Residency; Short-Term Rental.** SB 9 requires every applicant for a ministerial lot split to provide an affidavit confirming that the applicant intends to reside in one of the SB 9 units for three years. The City shall enforce this requirement. No units created under SB 9 shall be used for short-term rental.
- 6) **Impact/Development Fees.** Applicants for SB 9 projects shall pay all applicable development impact fees imposed by the City.
- 7) **Historic Properties.** An SB 9 project may not be located at a property included on the State Historic Resources Inventory, as defined in Section 5020.1 of the Public Resources Code, or at a site that is designated by the City as a historic landmark or listed in the City's historic resource inventory, pursuant to Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 12.44.
- 8) **Unavoidable Adverse Impacts.** SB 9 authorizes the Building Official to deny a project upon written findings, based on a preponderance of evidence, that the project will have a specific, adverse impact upon public health and safety or the physical environment for which there is no feasible method to mitigate or avoid. The Building Official shall assess every SB 9 application for

such unavoidable adverse impacts and shall, in consultation with the City Attorney, deny a project if an unavoidable adverse impact is identified. For greater clarity, a project would have a specific, adverse impact on the physical environment if it would have an unavoidable impact on historic resources, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5

**APPENDIX 3**  
**INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

SB 9 applies in “single-family residential zones.” The term “single-family residential zone” as used in Government Code Sections 65852.21(a) and 66411.7(a)(3)(A) is not defined. Within the City of Los Altos, the term “single-family residential zone” shall be construed to mean an R1 zoning designation.

SB 9 allows for ministerial approval of certain “new” residential dwelling units. The term “new unit” as used in Government Code Section 65852.21(i)(1) is not defined, but provisions of SB 9 appear to assume that a new residential dwelling unit could include a reconstructed residential dwelling unit. Therefore, the term “new unit,” as used in SB 9, shall be construed to mean any of the following:

- (1) A new residential dwelling unit (other than an accessory dwelling unit)<sup>1</sup> proposed to be constructed on previously vacant ground;
- (2) A new residential dwelling unit (other than an accessory dwelling unit) constructed in place of a demolished residential dwelling unit;<sup>2</sup>
- (3) A residential dwelling unit (other than an accessory dwelling unit) reconstructed to the substantial equivalence of new.

As used above, a residential dwelling unit is reconstructed to the “substantial equivalence of new” if any of the following three sets of criteria apply:

- (1) The residential dwelling unit is stripped to the studs and/or foundation and reconstructed;
- (2) A substantial remodel is proposed in connection with a substantial addition so that the home will have the appearance of a new home and a remaining physical and economic life comparable to that of a new home. These criteria shall be deemed to be met if all the following apply:
  - a. An addition is proposed to an existing residential dwelling unit equal to or greater in size than 50% of the floor area of the existing residential dwelling unit (excluding garages, accessory dwelling units, other accessory structures, crawl spaces, unfinished attics, and basement floor areas);

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<sup>1</sup> Reference to accessory dwelling units here is not meant to exclude construction of such units as allowed under Government Code Sections 65852.2 and 65852.22. Rather, the intent here is merely to define the term “new unit” for purposes of Section 65852.21(i)(1).

<sup>2</sup> Nothing herein is intended to exempt an applicant from the requirements of Government Code Section 65852.21(a)(3)-(5).

- b. At least 25% (or more, if necessary to bring the structure into compliance with applicable building codes) of the existing roof will be demolished, repaired, or replaced, and the entire roof covering will be replaced;
  - c. At least 25% (or more, if necessary to bring the structure into compliance with applicable building codes) of the existing façade will be demolished, repaired, or replaced, the entire façade will be repainted or otherwise resurfaced, and the entire façade for the residential dwelling unit in its completed condition is designed to match;
  - d. All existing floor coverings and plumbing fixtures will be removed and, as applicable, replaced;
  - e. Sprinklers will be installed if not already provided;
  - f. At least 25% (or more, if necessary to bring the structure into compliance with applicable building codes) of existing drywall or other wall coverings will be demolished, repaired, or replaced, and all retained wall covering will be repainted or otherwise resurfaced; and
  - g. All exterior doors and windows will be replaced.
- (3) All the major systems of the home are repaired or replaced so that the home will have the appearance of a new home and a remaining physical and economic life comparable to that of a new home. These criteria shall be deemed to be met if all the following apply:
- a. All existing plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems will be replaced or rehabilitated consistent with modern building standards to ensure an estimated remaining physical life of at least 50 years for plumbing and electrical systems and 20 years for HVAC systems; and
  - b. The circumstances described in Item Nos. 2(b) to 2(g) apply.

For greater clarity, a lot developed under SB 9 may contain no more than four total residential dwelling units. These shall be limited to the following:

- (1) On a lot that is not split pursuant to Government Code Section 66411.7 and for which an existing primary residential dwelling unit is retained: one existing primary residential dwelling unit, one new primary residential dwelling unit, one accessory dwelling unit, and one junior accessory dwelling unit, for four units in total.
- (2) On a lot that is not split pursuant to Government Code Section 66411.7 and for which an existing primary dwelling unit does not exist or is demolished or reconstructed: two new primary residential dwelling units, one accessory dwelling unit, and one junior accessory dwelling unit, for four units in total.
- (3) On a lot that is split pursuant to Government Code section 66411.7: not more than two existing primary and/or accessory residential dwelling units (including junior accessory dwelling units) per newly created lot and not more than two new primary residential dwelling units per newly created lot, for an ultimate total of not more than two residential

dwelling units per newly created lot and four residential dwelling units total. In lieu of two new primary residential dwelling units, an applicant may propose one new primary residential dwelling unit together with either a new accessory dwelling unit or a new junior accessory dwelling unit, provided that the applicant submits a written statement with the application for the housing development project indicating the applicant's understanding that providing the accessory dwelling unit or junior accessory dwelling unit will prevent the applicant from constructing a second primary residential dwelling unit. It is the intent of this provision that not more than four units may be constructed per original lot.

## Approved Plate Heights through DRC Public Hearing in 2021

Project No.	DRC Approval Date	1st-Story Plate Height	2nd-Story Plate Height	Notes
SC21-0034	11/17/2021	10'	8'	Project consists of a new two-story house. Plate heights were approved with consideration of neighborhood compatibility and integration and design mitigations.
SC21-0032	11/17/2021	9'	9'	Project consists of a new two-story house.
SC21-0012	10/20/2021	9'-6"	9'	Project consists of a new two-story house.
SC21-0010	10/20/2021	9'-6"	8'-6"	Project consists of a new two-story house.
SC21-0006	8/4/2021	8'	7'	Project consists of a second story addition to a one-story house.
SC21-0001	8/4/2021	9'	8'	Project consists of a first and second story addition and remodel to an existing two-story residence.
SC21-0006	6/2/2021	8'	8'	Project consists of a first and second story addition and remodel to an existing two-story residence.
SC21-0003	6/2/2021	9'	9'	Project consists of a new two-story house.
SC21-0004	6/2/2021	8'-6"	8'	Project consists of a first and second story addition and remodel to an existing two-story residence.
SC20-0016	5/19/2021	9'	8'-1"	Project consists of a first and second story addition and remodel to an existing two-story residence.
SC21-0021	5/19/2021	8'	8'	Project consists of a first and second story addition.
SC21-0002	5/19/2021	8'	8'	Project consists of a second story addition to a one-story house.
SC21-0015	5/5/2021	9'-4"	8'	Project consists of a first and second story addition and remodel to an existing two-story residence.
SC21-0019	3/17/2021	9' on sides; 18' at highest	8' on sides; 11'-6" at highest	Project consists of a new two-story house. Various plate heights are driven by the modern shed roof forms.
SC20-0004	2/3/2021	8'-6"	8'	Project consists of a first and second story addition and remodel to an existing two-story residence.
SC20-0014	1/6/2021	8'	8'	Project consists of a first and second story addition and remodel to an existing two-story residence.





**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-57**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
ESTABLISHING OBJECTIVE STANDARDS FOR SINGLE FAMILY  
RESIDENCES TO IMPLEMENT SENATE BILL 9**

**WHEREAS**, on September 16, 2021, the Governor signed Senate Bill 9 (Stats. 2021, Ch. 162) (“SB 9”); and

**WHEREAS**, SB 9 allows for streamlined ministerial approval for certain residential dwelling units in single-family residential zones; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of SB 9 is to address California’s affordable housing crisis by promoting small-scale neighborhood residential development to provide for increased housing opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, SB 9 requires the City to apply objective design standards to residential dwelling units approved pursuant to the legislation and prohibits discretionary design review for such units; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Los Altos has adopted Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines (the “SFRDG”) pursuant to Section 14.76.020 of the Los Altos Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, to implement SB 9, it is necessary or convenient that the City Council amend the SFRDG to specify objective design criteria applicable to new single-family homes; and

**WHEREAS**, SB 9 allows cities to impose certain standards for projects approved under that legislation, which the City Council desires to adopt; and

**WHEREAS**, certain ambiguities in SB 9 require resolution pending guidance from the judiciary and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the City Council of the City of Los Altos, as follows:

1. Effective January 1, 2022, the SFRDG are hereby amended to include as APPENDIX D-1 thereof the objective single-family design guidelines (the “Objective Standards”) attached to this Resolution as **Appendix 1**. After January 1, 2022, applications to remodel existing single-family residences and applications to construct new single-family residences not subject to approval under SB 9 shall continue to be subject to the SFRDG. Applications to construct new single-family residences subject to approval under SB 9 shall comply with the Objective Standards. Applicants for projects subject

to approval under SB 9 are strongly encouraged to comply with all provisions of the SFRDG to ensure high quality design and neighborhood compatibility.

2. Nothing in this Resolution or its appendices is intended to preclude the application to SB 9 projects of: building codes, state and local rules with respect to accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units, or other laws generally applicable to housing development projects of one to four units.
3. As soon as practicable, Staff is directed to hold one or more study sessions with the Planning Commission and with the Design Review Commission to obtain feedback concerning the Objective Standards from both commissions and from the public. Relying on such feedback and the experience of Staff in implementing SB 9, Staff is hereby directed to return to the City Council no later than May 2022 to report on the implementation of SB 9 and to recommend any amendments to the Objective Standards.
4. SB 9 authorizes local agencies to impose certain standards and requirements outlined in **Appendix 2** to this Resolution. Those standards and requirements are hereby adopted, and the SFRDG is hereby amended to incorporate the standards as APPENDIX D-2 thereof.
5. SB 9 contains certain ambiguities that require interpretation. Pending further guidance from the Department of Housing and Community Development and the judiciary, Staff are hereby directed to follow the guidance included in the interpretive guidance document attached as **Appendix 3** to this Resolution.
6. The City Council hereby finds that the adoption of this Resolution is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption) and 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for the Protection of the Environment), in that the regulations hereby imposed are intended to preserve scenic quality for the City of Los Altos by establishing design guidelines to protect the existing community character, and because it can be seen with certainty that the adoption of the regulations hereby imposed will not have a significant effect on the environment (or that any such effect is wholly speculative), and none of the circumstances in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies.
7. In adopting this Resolution, the City Council intends that it be construed to be consistent with the state and federal constitutions and with applicable state housing laws, including SB 9. If any section, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Resolution (including its appendices), is, for any reason, held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions hereof.
8. Any person wishing to challenge the validity of any provision of this Resolution (including its appendices), whether facially or as applied, may, if aggrieved by such provision, appeal to the City Council pursuant to Chapter 1.12 of the Los Altos

Municipal Code. As used herein, a person is “aggrieved” if, (a) a provision of this Resolution would prevent the individual from seeking approval of a housing development project for which the individual would like to apply, and (b) in the opinion of the individual, the challenged provision is invalid or unconstitutional. If the City Council grants an appeal a facial challenge, then it shall direct staff to propose appropriate amendments to this Resolution, consistent with the City Council’s decision on the appeal. If the City Council grants an as-applied challenge, then it may allow an exception to standards to the limited extent necessary to avoid the invalidity or unconstitutionality.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Los Altos at a meeting thereof on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
, MAYOR

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Andrea Chelemengos, MMC, CITY CLERK

**APPENDIX 1  
OBJECTIVE STANDARDS ADOPTED AS**

**APPENDIX D-1 TO THE SFRDG**

**Objective Standards for Single-Family Residential Zone**

It is intent that the following standards shall not be applied to preclude a housing development project allowed under SB9. As used here, a residential dwelling unit includes living space only and not parking or accessory structures.

**1. Definition – any term not defined in this section has the meaning given in the City Municipal Code unless otherwise specified.**

“Secondary front lot line” means a lot line abutting a street which is not a front lot line.

“Plate height” means the vertical distance measured from the top of the finished floor to the top of the plates.

“Exterior finish” refers to the exterior façade of a house, excluding the roofs, trim, windows, doors, and shutters.

“Exterior trim” refers to the finish materials on the exterior of a building, such as moldings applied around openings (window trim, door trim), siding, windows, exterior doors, attic vents, and crawl space vents.

“Lines of sight” means with a 60-degree angle beginning at the starting point, 30 degrees to the left and 30 degrees to the right in horizontal perspective.

“High-quality transit corridor” means corridor with fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than fifteen minutes during the morning and afternoon peak commute hours.

“Major transit stop” means a site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.

**2. SB 9 – Development Standards**

**A. Lot Split and Minimum Site Area**

An existing parcel shall not be subdivided into more than two parcels. The smallest subdivided parcel shall not be less than forty percent (40%) of the original parcel, and both newly subdivided parcels each shall be no smaller than one thousand and two hundred (1,200) square feet.

**B. All development standards under Government Code Section 66411.7 are hereby adopted.**

**C. Site Frontage and Site Width**

- a. The minimum width of the access corridor for each flag lot shall be twenty (20) feet, and shall provide direct access to a public or private street.
- b. Easements for the provision of public services and facilities and egress and ingress are required.

**D. Coverage.** The following coverage standards apply unless they would preclude a housing development project allowed under SB 9.

- a. The maximum coverage for all structures in excess of six feet in height shall be thirty-five (35) percent of the total area of the site where the height of one-story development does not exceed twenty (20) feet.
- b. A minimum of fifty (50) percent of the required front yard area shall be a combination of pervious landscape material and landscape.
- c. On sites where the lot coverage exceeds thirty (30) percent, two-story structures shall not be allowed.

**E. Floor Area Ratio.** The following coverage standards apply unless they would preclude a housing development project allowed under SB 9.

- a. For lots with a net site area not exceeding eleven thousand (11,000) square feet, the maximum floor area shall be thirty-five (35) percent of the net site area.
- b. For lots with a net site area exceeding eleven thousand (11,000) square feet, the maximum floor area shall be three thousand eight hundred fifty (3,850) square feet plus ten (10) percent times the net site area minus eleven thousand (11,000) square feet.

**F. Setbacks.**

- a. Except as noted below, the minimum setbacks shall be as follows:

<b>Front*</b>	
<b>First Story</b>	25 feet
<b>Second Story</b>	30 feet
<b>Secondary Front*</b>	
<b>First Story</b>	10 feet
<b>Second Story</b>	13 feet
<b>Side</b>	

<b>First Story</b>	No less than 4 feet. However, to reduce the privacy impacts to abutting property owners, applicants are encouraged to voluntarily increase the setbacks to be at least 10 feet from the side property lines.
<b>Second Story*</b>	No less than 11.5 feet. However, to reduce the privacy impacts to abutting property owners, applicants are encouraged to voluntarily increase the second story setback to be at least 17.5 feet from the side property lines.
<b>Rear</b>	No less than 4 feet. However, to reduce the privacy impacts to abutting property owners, applicants are encouraged to voluntarily increase the rear setback to be at least 10 feet from the rear property line.

- b. No architectural features (i.e. cantilevers, bay windows, and/or any other architectural projections) shall be allowed within the side and rear required setback areas except for 12-inch maximum eaves with four-inch maximum gutters.
- c. Notwithstanding these rules, the applicant shall be allowed to construct within the dimensions of an existing legal building.

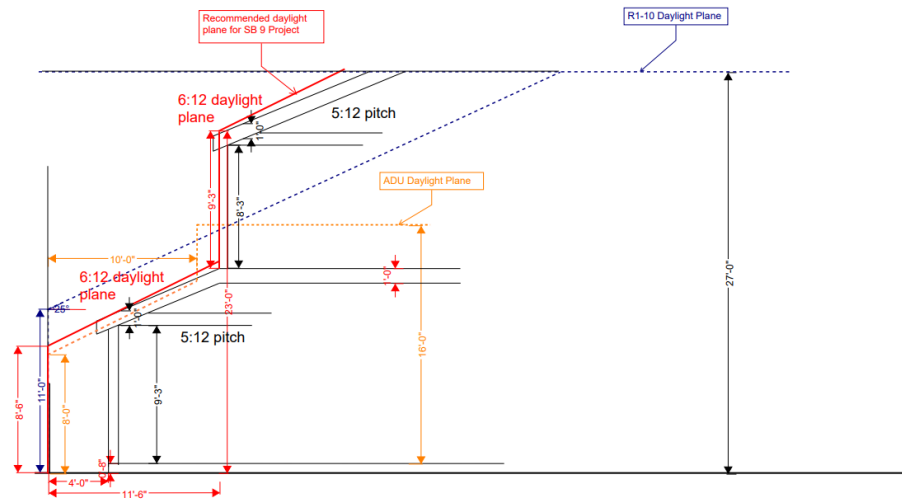
\*Unless a housing development project allowed under SB 9 is precluded.

**G. Height of Structures**

No structure shall exceed two stories or twenty-seven (27) feet in height from the natural grade. On flag lots the height of structures shall be limited to one story and twenty (20) feet in height. Basements shall not be considered a story. When the lot coverage exceeds or is proposed to exceed thirty (30) percent, the maximum height of structures shall be twenty (20) feet.

**H. Daylight Plane**

- a. No portion of any residential units shall extend above or beyond a daylight plane as follows unless a housing development project allowed under SB9 is precluded.
- b. The daylight plane starts at a height of eight feet and six inches (8'-6") at the property line and proceeds inward at 6:12 slope. At eleven feet and six



The daylight plane starts at a height of eight feet and six inches (8'-6") at the property line and proceeds inward at 6:12 slope. At eleven feet and six inches from the property line, the daylight plane increase to twenty three feet (23') and proceeds inward at 6:12 slope. All appurtenances, including chimneys, vents and antennas, shall be within the daylight plane. The daylight plane is not applied to a side or rear property line when it abuts a public alley or public street. However, the daylight plane shall not be enforced if it prohibits two single-family units with 4-foot rear and side-yard setbacks and 800 square feet each in floor area .

## I. Basements.

Basements shall be regulated as follows:

- a. Basements shall not extend beyond the floor area of the first floor of the main or accessory structure above;
- b. Light wells, ingress and egress wells, patio wells, and other similar elements shall not be permitted within a required setback yards.
- c. Light wells, ingress and egress wells, patio wells, and other similar elements shall utilize vertical retaining walls. Contour graded slopes, which expose the basement as a story, are prohibited.
- d. Light wells, ingress and egress wells, patio wells, and other similar elements shall be at least seventy-five (75) percent open in area to light and air above.

## J. Outdoor kitchen, barbeques, fireplaces and swimming pools.

Outdoor kitchen barbeques, fireplaces, and swimming pools shall be subject to zoning standards of the underlying zoning district.

**K. Parking.**

- a. One covered parking for each unit with minimum dimensions of nine (9) feet in width and eighteen (18) feet in depth is required. Uncovered parking shall be allowed only to the extent necessary to facilitate the construction of two units that each is 800 square feet in size.
- b. No parking is required in either of the following instances:
  - 1) The subject parcel is located within one-half mile walking distance of either a high-quality transit corridor or a major transit stop.
  - 2) A car share vehicle program is located within one block of the parcel.

**L. Signs.**

Signs shall be subject to zoning standards of the underlying zoning district.

**M. Fences.**

Fences shall be subject to zoning standards of the underlying zoning district.

**N. Nonconforming use regulations**

Corrections on nonconforming zoning conditions shall not be required for the ministerial approval of a parcel map application for the creation of a lot split pursuant to SB 9.

**O. Accessory Structures.**

Accessory structures shall be subject to zoning standards of the underlying zoning district.

**3. SB 9 – Objective Design Standards****A. Plate Heights.**

- a. Plate height is limited to 9'-3" for the first floor except for an entry porch may have a maximum plate height of 12' and a garage may have a maximum plate height of 10'.
- b. Plate height is limited to 8'-3" for the second floor.

**B. Second Floor Windows.**

Second floor windows shall be regulated as follows:

- a. On elevations that are facing interior side property lines, a minimum sill height of 4'-6" is required for all second-floor windows.
- b. On elevations that are facing rear property lines adjacent to a neighboring property, a minimum sill height of the California Building Code (CBC) minimum required sill height for egress or light and ventilation shall be provided.



- c. For any windows within ten feet of rear or interior side property lines adjacent to a neighboring property, the maximum second story window size shall be no larger than the CBC minimum required size.

### **C. Balcony and Rooftop Deck.**

Balconies and rooftop decks shall be regulated as follows:

- a. Balconies and/or roof decks are prohibited when facing interior side yards and rear yard adjacent to a neighboring property.
- b. A balcony or a roof deck is allowed only on front elevations facing public and private streets; and a minimum of twenty-five (25) feet side setback shall be provided from the side property lines to the edge of the balcony or roof deck.
- c. The maximum depth for any balconies and rooftop decks shall be four (4) feet.
- d. The maximum size for any balconies and rooftop decks shall be 25 square feet.
- e. Screening devices shall include solid railing walls instead of open railings, and latticework above the required railing height to obscure sight lines from a balcony or a roof deck.

### **D. Screening Vegetation.**

Screening vegetation shall be regulated as follows:

- a. Screening vegetation is required in either of the following situations:
  - 1) Within lines of sight for any proposed balcony and roof deck projected to any side property line, screening vegetation shall be planted.
  - 2) Within lines of sight from each jamb of any windows with a sill height of less than 4'-6" at second floor, screening vegetations shall be planted.
- b. Any required screening vegetation shall be evergreen species reaching to fifteen feet through twenty feet in height at their mature age with permanent irrigation and shall be maintained for the life of the project.
- c. At least twenty-four-inch (24-inch) box screening vegetation shall be planted prior to occupancy of the residence.

### **E. Landscaping**

Onsite landscaping shall be regulated as follows:

- a. Trees selected from the [Street Tree Planting List](#) are required to be planted on site following the standards below:

- 1) For lots five thousand (5,000) square feet in size or greater, at least two, Category II trees shall be planted with at least one, Category II tree planted in the front yard. For each additional five thousand (5,000) square-foot lot size, one more Category II tree shall be planted onsite.
  - 2) For lots with less than five thousand (5,000) square feet in size, at least one, Category II tree or two Category III trees shall be planted onsite.
  - 3) If there are existing trees onsite, an arborist report, prepared by an ISA certified arborist, may be required to determine the equivalent value of existing trees compared to the Street Tree Planting List.
- b. Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance (WELO) and its submittal requirements apply to the following projects:
- 1) New construction projects with new or rebuilt landscape areas that exceed five hundred (500) square feet.
  - 2) Remodels and/or additions to existing single-family houses with new or rebuilt landscape areas that exceed two thousand and five hundred (2,500) square feet.

**F. Construction Materials and Colors.**

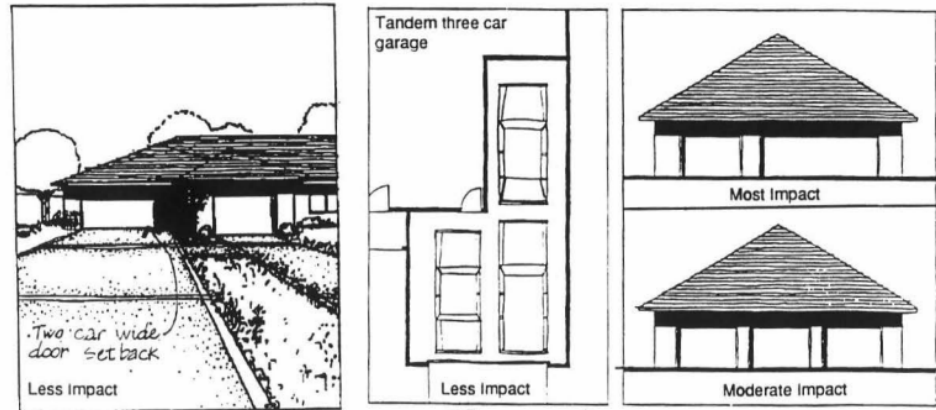
All construction materials shall be long-term (30 years) durability and appearance, as per manufacture's specifications. Specifically, the construction materials shall be subject to the following:

- a. Foam trim with a painted stucco finish is prohibited throughout the structure(s).
- b. Mixing roof materials and colors are not allowed except for curved dormers and shed roof structures.
- c. Exterior finish including wainscoting used for one structure shall be no greater than three different materials. Each material may be a different color, but every part of exterior finish comprised of a single material shall be a single color.
- d. Window and door trims shall be limited to one material and one color. The material and color shall be the same for both windows and door trims.
- e. Architectural detailing shall be incorporated such as window and door trim, belly bands, cornices, shutters, column accents to the entry porch, and railings in an integrated composition.

**G. Site and Building Design.**

The site and building design shall be subject to the following standards to create visual variety and avoid a large-scale appearance:

- a. Driveway shall be designed per the following standards:
  - 1) Each property is prohibited from more than one curb cut or driveway accessing a street unless the subject site is fronting a City's Arterial or Collector road.
  - 2) A curb cut or driveway width connecting to a public or private street shall be no greater than twenty-two (22) feet.
  - 3) For corner lots, driveway connections shall be at least thirty (30) feet from the intersecting corner property lines at the street intersection.
  - 4) If the project impacts a street shoulder, then it shall be improved accordingly per City's Street Shoulder Improvement Policy.
- b. Façade articulation shall be provided with at least six corners on the first floor.
- c. Building entrances shall have a roofed projection (such as a porch) or recess with a minimum depth of at least five feet and a minimum horizontal area of thirty (30) square feet. Any corners within the building entrances shall not count as part of the corners as required above.
- d. Downspout shall be painted to match or accent the exterior finish color.
- e. Attached garage shall be subject to the following standards:
  - 1) Attached garage shall be recessed at least one foot from the front elevation wall plane of the residence.
  - 2) When a three-car attached garage is proposed, visual impact shall be reduced by, (i) using a tandem parking layout inside a two-car-wide garage; (ii) using three single-car-wide garage doors instead of a double and a single garage door; or (iii) setting back one of the doors from the others.



- f. Windows and doors shall either be trimmed or recessed.
- 1) When trimmed, the trim material shall not be less than 3.5" in width by 3/4" in depth when protruding from the wall.
  - 2) When recessed, the building primary siding material shall cover the recessed edge faces and wrap toward the interior face of the window glazing or door face by not less than 2 inches in depth.
- g. The design of roof shall be regulated as follows:
- 1) No more than two types of roof forms shall be used.
  - 2) No more than two roof pitches shall be used.
- h. First floor finished elevation shall be no more than twenty-two (22) inches above existing natural grade on a non-hillside lot. In a flood zone or flood way, the first-floor level may be set at the minimum allowed above grade to meet code requirements.
- i. For a hillside property, a stepped foundation is required where the average slope beneath the proposed structure is 10% or greater.
- j. No mechanical equipment shall be located in any required side and rear yards. The placement and operation of the mechanical equipment must be consistent with the City's Noise Ordinance.
- k. No exterior staircases above grade shall be allowed.
- l. Except for pathway lighting, outdoor lighting fixtures shall be downward facing and fully shielded or recessed.
- m. All new utility services and relocated existing utility services are placed underground pursuant to Chapter 12.68 of Municipal Code.

**APPENDIX 2**  
**STANDARDS ADOPTED PURSUANT TO SB 9 AS**  
**APPENDIX D-2 TO THE SFRDG**

- 1) **Objective Zoning/Subdivision/Design Standards.** SB 9 authorizes the City to impose objective zoning standards, objective subdivision standards, and objective design review standards applicable to structures and parcels created by an urban lot split that do not conflict with SB 9 or preclude the construction of two 800 square foot minimum primary dwelling units. Accordingly, all such existing objective City standards shall apply to SB 9 projects, in addition to any additional objective standards that the City may adopt.
- 2) **Maximum Units and Lots.** The City shall not approve more residential dwelling units or lots for any SB 9 project than required under state law, as set forth in Appendix 3 of City Council Resolution No. 21-\_\_.
- 3) **Parking.** SB 9 allows the City to choose to require parking consistent with the terms thereof. Accordingly, the City shall require off-street parking of one space per unit, unless the lot is located within one-half mile walking distance of either a high-quality transit corridor, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 21155 of the Public Resources Code, or a major transit stop, as defined in Section 21064.3 of the Public Resources Code, or unless there is a car share vehicle located within one block of the parcel.
- 4) **Setbacks.** SB 9 allows the City to choose to require setbacks consistent with the terms thereof. Accordingly, the City shall require setbacks of not less than four feet from the side and rear lot lines in all SB 9 projects, except as otherwise specified in SB 9.
- 5) **Applicant Residency; Short-Term Rental.** SB 9 requires every applicant for a ministerial lot split to provide an affidavit confirming that the applicant intends to reside in one of the SB 9 units for three years. The City shall enforce this requirement. No units created under SB 9 shall be used for short-term rental.
- 6) **Impact/Development Fees.** Applicants for SB 9 projects shall pay all applicable development impact fees imposed by the City.
- 7) **Historic Properties.** An SB 9 project may not be located at a property included on the State Historic Resources Inventory, as defined in Section 5020.1 of the Public Resources Code, or at a site that is designated by the City as a historic landmark or listed in the City's historic resource inventory, pursuant to Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 12.44.
- 8) **Unavoidable Adverse Impacts.** SB 9 authorizes the Building Official to deny a project upon written findings, based on a preponderance of evidence, that the project will have a specific, adverse impact upon public health and safety or the physical environment for which there is no feasible method to mitigate or avoid. The Building Official shall assess every SB 9 application for

such unavoidable adverse impacts and shall, in consultation with the City Attorney, deny a project if an unavoidable adverse impact is identified. For greater clarity, a project would have a specific, adverse impact on the physical environment if it would have an unavoidable impact on historic resources, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5

**APPENDIX 3**  
**INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

SB 9 applies in “single-family residential zones.” The term “single-family residential zone” as used in Government Code Sections 65852.21(a) and 66411.7(a)(3)(A) is not defined. Within the City of Los Altos, the term “single-family residential zone” shall be construed to mean an R1 zoning designation.

SB 9 allows for ministerial approval of certain “new” residential dwelling units. The term “new unit” as used in Government Code Section 65852.21(i)(1) is not defined, but provisions of SB 9 appear to assume that a new residential dwelling unit could include a reconstructed residential dwelling unit. Therefore, the term “new unit,” as used in SB 9, shall be construed to mean any of the following:

- (1) A new residential dwelling unit (other than an accessory dwelling unit)<sup>1</sup> proposed to be constructed on previously vacant ground;
- (2) A new residential dwelling unit (other than an accessory dwelling unit) constructed in place of a demolished residential dwelling unit;<sup>2</sup>
- (3) A residential dwelling unit (other than an accessory dwelling unit) reconstructed to the substantial equivalence of new.

As used above, a residential dwelling unit is reconstructed to the “substantial equivalence of new” if any of the following three sets of criteria apply:

- (1) The residential dwelling unit is stripped to the studs and/or foundation and reconstructed;
- (2) A substantial remodel is proposed in connection with a substantial addition so that the home will have the appearance of a new home and a remaining physical and economic life comparable to that of a new home. These criteria shall be deemed to be met if all the following apply:
  - a. An addition is proposed to an existing residential dwelling unit equal to or greater in size than 50% of the floor area of the existing residential dwelling unit (excluding garages, accessory dwelling units, other accessory structures, crawl spaces, unfinished attics, and basement floor areas);

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<sup>1</sup> Reference to accessory dwelling units here is not meant to exclude construction of such units as allowed under Government Code Sections 65852.2 and 65852.22. Rather, the intent here is merely to define the term “new unit” for purposes of Section 65852.21(i)(1).

<sup>2</sup> Nothing herein is intended to exempt an applicant from the requirements of Government Code Section 65852.21(a)(3)-(5).

- b. At least 25% (or more, if necessary to bring the structure into compliance with applicable building codes) of the existing roof will be demolished, repaired, or replaced, and the entire roof covering will be replaced;
  - c. At least 25% (or more, if necessary to bring the structure into compliance with applicable building codes) of the existing façade will be demolished, repaired, or replaced, the entire façade will be repainted or otherwise resurfaced, and the entire façade for the residential dwelling unit in its completed condition is designed to match;
  - d. All existing floor coverings and plumbing fixtures will be removed and, as applicable, replaced;
  - e. Sprinklers will be installed if not already provided;
  - f. At least 25% (or more, if necessary to bring the structure into compliance with applicable building codes) of existing drywall or other wall coverings will be demolished, repaired, or replaced, and all retained wall covering will be repainted or otherwise resurfaced; and
  - g. All exterior doors and windows will be replaced.
- (3) All the major systems of the home are repaired or replaced so that the home will have the appearance of a new home and a remaining physical and economic life comparable to that of a new home. These criteria shall be deemed to be met if all the following apply:
- a. All existing plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems will be replaced or rehabilitated consistent with modern building standards to ensure an estimated remaining physical life of at least 50 years for plumbing and electrical systems and 20 years for HVAC systems; and
  - b. The circumstances described in Item Nos. 2(b) to 2(g) apply.

For greater clarity, a lot developed under SB 9 may contain no more than four total residential dwelling units. These shall be limited to the following:

- (1) On a lot that is not split pursuant to Government Code Section 66411.7 and for which an existing primary residential dwelling unit is retained: one existing primary residential dwelling unit, one new primary residential dwelling unit, one accessory dwelling unit, and one junior accessory dwelling unit, for four units in total.
- (2) On a lot that is not split pursuant to Government Code Section 66411.7 and for which an existing primary dwelling unit does not exist or is demolished or reconstructed: two new primary residential dwelling units, one accessory dwelling unit, and one junior accessory dwelling unit, for four units in total.
- (3) On a lot that is split pursuant to Government Code section 66411.7: not more than two existing primary and/or accessory residential dwelling units (including junior accessory dwelling units) per newly created lot and not more than two new primary residential dwelling units per newly created lot, for an ultimate total of not more than two residential



dwelling units per newly created lot and four residential dwelling units total. In lieu of two new primary residential dwelling units, an applicant may propose one new primary residential dwelling unit together with either a new accessory dwelling unit or a new junior accessory dwelling unit, provided that the applicant submits a written statement with the application for the housing development project indicating the applicant's understanding that providing the accessory dwelling unit or junior accessory dwelling unit will prevent the applicant from constructing a second primary residential dwelling unit. It is the intent of this provision that not more than four units may be constructed per original lot.