ORDER OF THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER, MARCH 31, 2020
LOS ALTOS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
GUIDANCE for ESSENTIAL ACTIVITY REVIEW, PERMITTING, and INSPECTING

The following is intended to provide guidance to the staff and customers of the Los Altos Community Development Department (Department) as to the types of construction or repair projects deemed to be “Essential Business” and that will continue to be reviewed, permitted, and inspected while the Order of the Santa Clara County’s Health Officer, Dated March 31, 2020, (Order) is in effect.

Construction or repair projects deemed “Essential Business” include the following:

- Projects immediately necessary to the maintenance, operation, or repair of Essential Infrastructure;
- Projects associated with Healthcare Operations, including creating or expanding Healthcare Operations, provided that such construction is directly related to the COVID-19 response;
- Affordable housing that is or will be income-restricted, including multi-family or mixed-use developments containing at least 10% income restricted units;
- Public works projects if specifically designated as an Essential Governmental Function by the lead governmental agency;
- Shelters and temporary housing, but not including hotels or motels;
- Projects immediately necessary to provide critical non-commercial services to individuals experiencing homelessness, elderly persons, persons who are economically disadvantaged, and persons with special needs;
- Construction necessary to ensure that existing construction sites that must be shut down under this Order are left in a safe and secure manner, but only to the extent necessary to do so;
- Construction necessary to ensure that residences and buildings containing Essential Businesses, as defined in the Order, are safe, sanitary, or habitable to the extent such construction or repair cannot reasonably be delayed, but not for cosmetic or other purposes;
- Repairs and replacements that are necessary to maintain the habitability, sanitation, and operation of residences and Essential Businesses, as defined in the Order, but not for cosmetic or other purposes; and
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- Tree Removal - but only to the limited extent necessary to maintain the habitability, sanitation, operation of Essential Businesses, as defined in the Order, or residences, or the safety of residents, employees, or the public (such as fire safety or tree trimming to prevent a dangerous condition), and not for cosmetic or other purposes (such as upkeep).

Permit applications for the above listed “Essential Business” shall be reviewed for compliance with the City of Los Altos Land Use Regulations and Policies and its Building Code Regulations (City’s Codes). If the project is compliant with City Codes, the appropriate permit shall be issued. Inspections, subject to scheduling, shall be conducted for permits issued in compliance with this guidance document.

It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate and document that their project meets with the above listed criteria for an “Essential Business” and “Social Distancing Protocols” listed and described in the Order.

In addition to physical inspections by Community Development Department staff, inspections may be accomplished in a manner deemed appropriate by the Building Official or Planning Services Manager and may include, but not be limited to, self-certification, photographic evidence, video evidence, or third-party certification or verification.

Any physical inspection of a project site by Department Staff shall be done in compliance with all “Social Distancing Protocols” listed and described in the Order.

Any construction or repair project not listed above shall be deemed to be a “Non-Essential Business” and shall not be permitted or inspected.

Where a conflict exists between this guidance document and the Order, the provisions of the Order control.

The guidance offered here may be amended or changed at any time in response to new information, experiences, and subsequent Orders of the Santa Clara County Health Officer.

A copy of the Order is included as an attachment to this document for reference.