

Commerce and housing zone planned

by Hyuntae Byun

News Editor

As Los Gatos grows, the way limited land is used is becoming a more and more pressing issue. Modern day Los Gatos, with its hip downtown, busy roads, and bustling schools is a sharp contrast to the Los Gatos of ninety years ago. Back then, Los Gatos was a small agricultural town that produced apricots, grapes, and prunes. Today, Los Gatos is a sea of residential and commercial blocks, with new developments every year. For instance, the former lots containing Akeena Solar and Honda are being transformed into residential complexes. As more people flock to Los Gatos, the strain on schools also steadily increases. LGHS alone gained around fifty students this year. As such, planning for one of the largest plots of undeveloped land remaining in Los Gatos has fueled some dispute over land usage.

Spanning forty acres (hence the name North 40), the area is located across the street from Good Samaritan Hospital and has Highway 85 to the north, 17 to the west, and Los Gatos Boulevard to the east. The orchard is the subject of debate because of its unique status as a largely untouched area of land.

This debate, however, is not new. In fact, plans for the development of the North 40 Area have been underway for the last twenty years, although interest in the project has fluctuated over time. In 1989, a Los Gatos Town Council-appointed Commercial Specific Plan Committee studied possibilities for economic development in various areas around Los Gatos, including the North 40 Area. In 1999, a North 40 Specific Plan was drafted as an extension to the town's General Plan to set up a vision for the North 40 Area.



ADULT HOUSING: Residences will be geared towards families without children.

While the General Plan lays out a long-term policy addressing physical, economic, and environmental growth, the Specific Plan provides standards for development. The 1999 North 40 Specific Plan was never adopted, and progress on the project was slow until Sept. 2010, when the town adopted a new General Plan. This General Plan outlined guiding principles for development and possible land uses. In early 2011, the town commissioned a North 40 Advisory Committee, which began to draft a new Specific Plan. This plan, in turn, was forwarded last October for consideration.



photos courtesy losgatosnorth40.com

DESIGNING THE PERFECT NEIGHBORHOOD: The planners behind the proposed residential area hope to create a green community that can be enjoyed by pedestrians, bikers, and drivers alike.



SQUARING OFF: Current plans for the site include blueprints for a chic new market square.

The guiding principles in the General Plan are "to have the North 40 area maintain the look and feel of Los Gatos. The North 40 Area has to embrace hillside views, trees, and open space and address current unmet residential and/or commercial needs. The North 40 area will minimize or mitigate impacts on town infrastructure, schools, and other community services."

The town and the Advisory Committee hope to accomplish these plans by creating an environment featuring a luxurious specialty marketplace with a walkable neighborhood that contains cafes and restaurants, centralized community gardens, and some specialty housing designed for seniors and families with no children. The project also hopes to increase funding for schools and the town through new tax revenue and developer fees, as well as to boost the Los Gatos economy by providing new commercial venues.

Currently, approximately 33 acres of the North 40 Area are owned by the Yuki family, with Grosvenor Americas responsible for land management. Last November, Grosvenor, SummerHill Homes, and Eden Housing submitted an application for approval to begin Phase I of development on the site. Still, as Planning Manager of the Community Development Department Joel Paulson notes, "there's a lot yet to be determined... there's an unbelievable amount of factors."

For instance, Paulson explained that even though they drafted the Specific Plan, "the challenge right now is the environmental impact report." The environmental impact report examines the impact of residential, commercial, hotel, and office space and would also set development perimeters for land usage, but is still being drafted. Currently, it is estimated that the drafted Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report will be discussed by the Planning Commission and Town Council in early 2014. From there, if both are reviewed and approved, developers will be able to start the submission process for developmental applications.

The plan has received some opposition due to the fact that this is one of the last undeveloped major areas in Los Gatos. However, when asked about opposition, Paulson said with a laugh that, "it's not overwhelming yet." He noted that "anything can happen... but in a best case scenario, I'd say that we'd see development begin in three to five years."

(Sources: losgatosnorth40.com, Mercury News)

Netflix expands

by Montana Fowler

Center Editor

In June 2013, the Los Gatos Town Council approved Netflix's building proposal, overriding the General Plan of Los Gatos which prohibits the construction of buildings over 35 feet tall. The Los Gatos Citizens for Responsible Development, LGCRD, is suing the town for approving the project despite the General Plan in order to preserve Los Gatos as a "small town." A group of supporters for the Netflix Building project put together a petition signed by approximately 4,100 voters to get the Albright Specific Plan on the June ballot, so Los Gatos residents can settle the issue. The Santa Clara Registrar of Voters just confirmed the signatures as Los Gatos residents, so the project will be on the ballot this June.

In order to expand their headquarters, Netflix wants to add two 65 foot buildings and two 50-foot buildings on Albright Way. Netflix Spokesman Joris Evers stated, "We feel the project was well-deliberated and the town's elected council struck a good compromise after much discussion and thought." However, the LGCRD's mainly argues that the expansion will increase traffic in Los Gatos, emphasizing the detrimental effect the increase in traffic will have on the small town community.

The LGCRD also projects an increase of approximately 300 students added in the next four to five years due to the new Netflix buildings, which they claim Los Gatos schools cannot handle space-wise, nor afford with state budgets, leading to an increase in parcel tax values for Los Gatos residents to afford the new students. In response to these claims, LezLi Logan, a supporter for the Netflix building project, stated, "Our schools have ever-increasing growth. No students are generated from a new corporate headquarters; however, one million dollars of new property tax is created every year regardless of who the company may be. This new recurring property tax revenue will go directly to our school districts' general funds to help pay for teachers, curriculum and other programs that keep our schools the best in California and our property values high."



courtesy wikicommons

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES: Netflix is expanding past its main offices.

The heart of the lawsuit lies in preserving the small town of Los Gatos and maintaining town codes. "This is a small town, not a large suburb. We want it to stay that way and the General Plan was worded to keep us small. The council, and we as citizens, have to stand up for what's right by screaming and shouting at the state legislature," stated Jak Van Nada.

While the heart of the building project lies in the economic benefits for the town of Los Gatos by creating and growing jobs, keeping Netflix and employees in town to patronize restaurants and local businesses, and maintaining a sustainable source of revenue for town services, like schools. John Shenk, the representative developer, commented, "We're working with community members on a plan to finally move beyond the constant barrage of legal appeals by a few naysayers."

With the initiative on the ballot, Los Gatos voters will have the opportunity to vote on the project this June. After a public debate, the final decision of the building project will be up to the residents of Los Gatos. (Sources: Mercury News, Change.org)

New classes are offered for the 2014-2015 school year

by Anna Esslinger

Culture Editor

Signing up for new classes is a daunting task; after logging onto Aeries, students are met with a list of the countless classes offered at LGHS. While a lot of high schools only offer basic curriculum, LGHS provides its students with way more than the required amount. This year the administration added even more classes for students to choose from.

The art department added Art History to their repertoire. Learn about Leonardo Di Vinci or Claude Monet in this fun and informational course. Luckily this class is offered to all grade levels, so freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors alike can bask in the beauty that is Art History.

For all the budding engineers, Principles of Engineering will

be offered next year. This past year Introduction to Engineering Design was first presented to students and has become a favorite of students, a students of Intro to Engineering, senior **Olivia Ahmed** said, "Intro to Engineering is a good way to brush up on your basic math skills, but it also gives you an idea about what engineering is all about. A lot of the class is spent working on the computer which can be tedious at times, but you start to get the hang of it after a while. I think principles of engineering will be a good class for people who want to learn about engineering in more depth." Unfortunately, this class is not offered to freshmen; however, students will have the last three years of their high school years to take this class.

In the performing arts there are two new classes: Introduction to Music Theory and Drama 1, 2, and 3. Drama has been a popular class in the past and is being reinstated next year. There will also be a new

Introduction to Music Theory class, which will target avid musicians. Both Drama and Music Theory are going to be offered to all grade levels.

Many LGHS students took Psychology their sophomore year, and now AP Psychology will be offered to those wanting to continue the subject. This class is a popular AP class at many schools around the Bay Area, including St. Francis and Harker, and now LGHS students will also be given the opportunity to take it.

Lastly, AP Human Geography will also be added the list of social studies electives. The title of the class is a bit ambiguous, but, in short, this class will introduce students to patterns and processes that have shaped human understanding.

Whether you decide to take any of these new classes next year or decide to keep with the classic classes offered, you will be filling up your schedule with academically invigorating courses.