

Survey is asking Los Gatos residents 33 questions about plans for North 40

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View Los Gatos' 'North 40' (http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msa=0&hl=en&ie=UTF8&t=h&msid=207307488458627702253.0004a63c707946a58a22f&ll=37.250417,-121.952105&spn=0.020496,0.025663&z=14&source=in_a_larger_map)

in a larger map

The town has come up with a new way to get input from residents on what should happen at the North 40 when it's developed--with an online visual preference survey that people can take in just a few minutes. The 33-question survey is at www.losgatosca.gov (<http://www.losgatosca.gov>) (click on "New!").**

The North 40 is the last piece of undeveloped land in Los Gatos. The roughly 40 acres are bounded by Los Gatos Boulevard, Lark Avenue and highways 85 and 101.

Today, much of the land is a walnut orchard, but in four or five years it's expected to be built into a mixed-use retail, commercial and residential development.

The Yuki family is the primary landowner and has hired Grosvenor Americas of San Francisco to help steer the development plan.

The survey is designed to give residents a chance to voice their opinions on the development. It includes pictures of different types of open spaces that could be in the North 40, as well as photos of buildings and townhomes that reflect a variety of architectural styles.

"I think everybody wants a mix of architectural styles," Los Gatos senior planner Suzanne Davis said, "and we keep hearing people don't want it to look like Santa Row."

But at community meetings and North 40 advisory group meetings, differing opinions of what the buildings should look like have emerged. "The community gravitates toward more traditional or mission-style buildings," Davis said. "The advisory committee liked agrarian and some modern styles."

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Survey-takers can vote for their likes and dislikes by clicking that the style they believe is appropriate, may be appropriate, is neutral, may not be appropriate or is not appropriate.

"If the majority of people don't like a particular style, that tells the design team 'don't design that.' So it's important information for town staff and the design team to have," Davis said.

In addition to being posted online, the survey was emailed to residents who have attended the North 40 community meetings.

"We wanted a wider group of people," Davis said about the online posting. "We also made it anonymous because we didn't want to discourage people from taking it." By early last week, 77 people had taken the survey.

Survey questions that deal with open spaces also offer a variety of views for people to choose from. For example, there's a plaza with an interactive fountain that children can play in, similar to the fountain at Town Plaza Park.

There are plazas with entertainment areas, park-like settings, sidewalk dining photos and active pedestrian spaces.

Davis expects there will be more online surveys for people to take as development of the North 40 proceeds. The current survey will remain online until further notice.