



8. Environment and Sustainability Element

Residents of the Town of Los Gatos are vitally interested in retaining the charm and character of their community, conserving natural resources, and reducing waste. This Element is concerned with protecting and enhancing each of these important aspects of the Town. The Environment and Sustainability Element promotes resource sustainability to protect the Town's built and natural environments for current and future generations.

State law requires that a General Plan include a Conservation Element that includes how the Town will conserve, develop, and use natural resources, including biological resources, water resources, and energy resources. This Element also addresses and references the reduction of greenhouse gasses (GHG) and air quality in the 2012 Sustainability Plan, since clean air is an important natural resource and a vital component of a healthy environment. Water service, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste and recycling are discussed in the Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element.

This Element involves preservation of visual resources, the cultivated and natural environment, historical resources and their cultural significance, and energy conservation. Concerns about some of these resources are shared with adjacent communities, such as climate change and air quality, and the Town is committed to playing its part in local and regional conservation efforts of the resources identified in this Element.

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Key Terms

Adaptation. Adaptation is preparing for climate change impacts that are expected to occur by making adjustments in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects that are aimed at minimizing harm or taking advantage of beneficial opportunities.

Ambient Noise Level. The combination of noise from all existing sources; the normal or existing level of noise at a given location.

A-Weighted Sound Level. All sound levels referred to in this policy document are in A-weighted decibels. A weighting de-emphasizes the very low and very high frequencies of sound in a manner like the human ear. Most community noise standards utilize A-weighting, as it provides a high degree of correlation with human annoyance and health effects.

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂). A naturally occurring gas that exists in the earth's atmosphere. CO₂ is also a by-product of burning fossil fuels and biomass, as well as land-use changes and other industrial processes. It is the principal man-made greenhouse gas (GHG) that affects the earth's radiative balance. It is the reference gas against which other GHGs are measured and, therefore, has a global warming potential of one.

Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e). CO₂e is the measure of how much heat trapping potential a given type of greenhouse gas has on average over a 100-year time period, based on its molecular structure compared to carbon dioxide (CO₂). CO₂ has a baseline of one, while other gases can be tens to thousands of times higher. The carbon dioxide equivalent for a gas is derived by multiplying the tons of the gas by the associated global warming potential. Carbon dioxide equivalents are commonly expressed as "metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents" (MT CO₂e). Different molecules decay at different rates, causing their heat trapping potential to decline over periods of decades to centuries.

Climate. Climate, in a narrow sense, is usually defined as the "average weather," or more rigorously, as the statistical description in terms of the mean and variability of relevant quantities over a period of time ranging from months to thousands of years. The classical period is three decades, as defined by the World Meteorological Organization. These quantities are most often surface variables such as temperature, precipitation, and wind. Climate in a wider sense is the state, including a statistical description, of the climate system.

Climate Change. Climate change refers to any significant change in measures of climate (such as temperature, precipitation, or wind) lasting for an extended period (decades or longer). Climate change may result from: natural factors, such as changes in the sun's intensity or slow changes in the earth's orbit around the sun; natural processes within the climate system (e.g., changes in ocean circulation); human activities that change the atmosphere's composition (e.g., through burning fossil fuels); and the land surface (e.g., deforestation, reforestation, urbanization, desertification, etc.).

Community Noise Equivalent Levels (CNEL). The average A-weighted noise level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of five decibels to noise levels occurring in the evening from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and the addition of 10 decibels to sound levels measured in the night between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

Criteria Pollutants. The criteria pollutants are the six principal pollutants harmful to public health and the environment for which the Environmental Protection Agency has set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The pollutants are carbon monoxide (CO), lead, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), ozone (O₃), particulate matter (PM), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂).

Day/Night Average Sound Level (Ldn). The average A-weighted noise level equivalent sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after the addition of ten decibels to sound levels in the night after 10:00 p.m. and before 7:00 a.m.

Decibel (dB). A logarithmic unit commonly used to measure noise level. It is a unit for describing the amplitude of sound as heard by the human ear. As examples, a quiet neighborhood at night might be 30-40 dB and a lawn mower might be 90 dB when standing nearby.

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Designated Creek. A creek that has been identified within the General Plan and that is located within the Town limits. Designated creeks within Los Gatos include Los Gatos Creek, Ross Creek, San Tomas Aquinas Creek, and Smith Creek.

Ecosystem. A community or group of living organisms that live in and interact with each other in a specific physical environment.

Equivalent Noise Level (Leq). The average A-weighted noise level during the measurement period.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG). Any gas that absorbs infrared radiation in the atmosphere. GHGs contribute to the greenhouse effect. Some GHGs such as CO₂ occur naturally and are emitted to the atmosphere through natural processes and human activities. Other GHGs (e.g., fluorinated gases) are created and emitted solely through human activities. The principal GHGs that enter the atmosphere because of human activities include water vapor, CO₂, methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), and fluorinated gases [hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆)].

Habitat. The natural environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM). An ecosystem-based strategy that focuses on long-term prevention of pests or their damage through a combination of techniques such as biological control, habitat manipulation, modification of cultural practices, and use of resistant varieties.

Noise-Sensitive Land Use. Land uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. These uses include residences; schools; nursing homes; historic sites; cemeteries; parks, recreation, and open space areas; hospitals and care facilities; sensitive wildlife habitats, including the habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered species; hotels and other short-term lodging (e.g., bed and breakfasts, motels); places of worship; and libraries.

Particulate Matter. Particulate matter is fine metal, smoke, soot, and dust particles suspended in the air. Particulate matter is measured by two sizes: course particles (PM₁₀), or particles between 2.5 and 10 micrometers in diameter; and fine particles (PM_{2.5}), or particles less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter.

Riparian. Of, on, or pertaining to the bank of a natural course of water. For example, riparian vegetation is composed of plant species normally found near streams, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and other freshwater bodies.

Watershed. The land surface area from which water drains into a common downstream point.

Wetlands. Areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. This definition of wetlands requires three wetland identification parameters to be present: wetland hydrology; hydric soils; and hydrophytic vegetation. Wetlands can be areas that are consistently inundated or seasonally inundated. Wetlands are delineated according to the USACE 1987 Wetlands Delineation Manual and are a subset of Waters of the United States.

8.1 Aesthetics

Community aesthetics refer to the appearance of a community and are an important component to the way residents feel about their community in terms of the relationship between people and the natural environment. Aesthetic resources improve quality of life and foster a sense of pride for the community. The range of visual resources in Los Gatos attracts visitors and provides pleasure to residents.


Scenic Views and other Natural Visual Resources

Natural visual resources primarily refer to the physical landscape, addressed here in Section 7.1 Aesthetics, Section 7.2, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, and Section 7.3, Biological Resources. While the following sections discuss the specific criteria of conserving these resources, Section 7.1, Aesthetics, addresses the way in which natural and built environments provide a sense of place specific to Los Gatos and are important to the

community identity. It includes scenic vistas, designated scenic highways and roadways, and other natural settings important to the quality of life for the Town residents and visitors.

Situated at the northeastern slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains, Los Gatos is defined by a beautiful natural setting that is part of the Town’s fabric in the form of striking views of the forested hillsides, mature trees, and creekside trails. The foothills and higher elevations afford views toward the greater Santa Clara Valley looking north and east. State Route (SR) 9 is an officially designated State Scenic Highway that bisects the Town on a north to south axis, just west and south of Los Gatos as Los Gatos-Saratoga Road. The portion of SR 17 between the SR 9 interchange and Santa Cruz is eligible for State Scenic Highway designation.

Throughout the community, wooded terrain provides a distinctive sense of place in Los Gatos, where residential development and native or landscaped vegetation commingle to support the distinctive Town character. The urban forest in Los Gatos has been recognized by a Tree City USA designation from the Arbor Day Foundation, noting the Town’s commitment to preserving this important feature.



Goals and policies pertaining to open space, parks, and trails are covered in the Section 7.1 (Open Space), Section 7.2 (Parks and Recreation) in the Open Space, Parks, and Recreation Element, and Section 5.2 (Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities) in the Mobility Element.

The following goals and policies aim to protect and promote aesthetic resources in Los Gatos.

ENV-1	Promote and protect viewsheds and scenic resources.
ENV-1.1	Scenic Resources
<div>SUS</div>	Require design review to prevent developments that, due to their site location and massing, block views from roadways and public spaces in the surrounding hillsides.
ENV-1.2	Scenic Easements
<div>SUS</div>	Maintain scenic easements in specifically designated areas, particularly in hillside development and in the Town core.
ENV-1.3	Undergrounding Requirements
	Utilities for new development shall be installed underground. If undergrounding is not possible, an in-lieu fee shall be paid for future undergrounding.
ENV-1.4	View Corridor Protection
	Encourage the protection of key view corridors as described in the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines to preserve the natural landscape and views of the surrounding hillsides.
ENV-2	Maintain and enhance trees and significant natural features. <div>SUS</div>
ENV-2.1	Tree Protection
<div>SUS</div>	Ensure tree removal and replacement during development is consistent with the latest in tree conservation standards to support the Town’s Arbor Day Foundation status as a Tree City USA.

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ENV-2.2

SUS

Landscaping in Public Spaces

The Town shall maintain existing trees and introduce new trees to enhance streetscapes, public spaces, and public parking lots to maximize the beneficial effects of tree canopies.

ENV-2.3

SUS

Landscape Design

Continue to update landscape design guidelines for development consistent with Biological Resources goals and policies. Landscape design should promote the implementation of native species, drought tolerant species, and fire-wise plants and designs, including in hillside areas and future planning areas.



Goals and policies pertaining to landscaping in development and overall landscape design are presented in both the Land Use and Community Design Elements.

8.2 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

Woodland/forest communities account for approximately 4,329 acres in the Los Gatos area and include riparian woodlands, oak woodlands, broad-leaved upland forest, and non-native ornamental trees. In the Town of Los Gatos Sphere of Influence (SOI) riparian woodlands occur along Los Gatos Creek, Guadalupe Creek, Pheasant Creek, San Tomas Aquino Creek, and other creeks and drainages. The riparian woodlands support a dense, well-developed canopy of riparian trees dominated by a mix of native species and non-native trees, including ornamentals. Oak woodlands are located primarily in the southern and eastern portions of Los Gatos. The forestland throughout the southern and eastern portions of Los Gatos are no longer used as a source of timber for logging. Many of these areas are designated as protected recreational and open space, serving as wildlife habitat and as an important resource for residents and visitors (See the Open Space, Parks, and Recreation Element for more on this topic). Approximately 1,650 acres of shrubland fall under this woodland designation, including undeveloped parcels that are currently designated for agriculture in the Town limits and in the SOI.

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly known as the Williamson Act, enables local governments to conserve specific agricultural and open space lands by entering into a contractual agreement with private landowners, who receive tax relief on designated agricultural and open space properties. Approximately 125 acres of land in the Town limits and 358 acres of land outside of the Town limits and in the SOI are under Williamson Act contracts (see Figure 8-1).

The following goal and policies will guide the preservation and conservation of agricultural resources.

ENV-3

Conserve agricultural lands as a biological resource.

SUS

ENV-3.1

SUS

Placement of New Residential Uses

Mitigate potential adverse health and safety impacts associated with the establishment of new residential and other sensitive land uses near agricultural operations using pesticides applied by spray techniques.

ENV-3.2

SUS

Project Siting

Prohibit the introduction of new incompatible land uses and environmental hazards into existing residential areas.

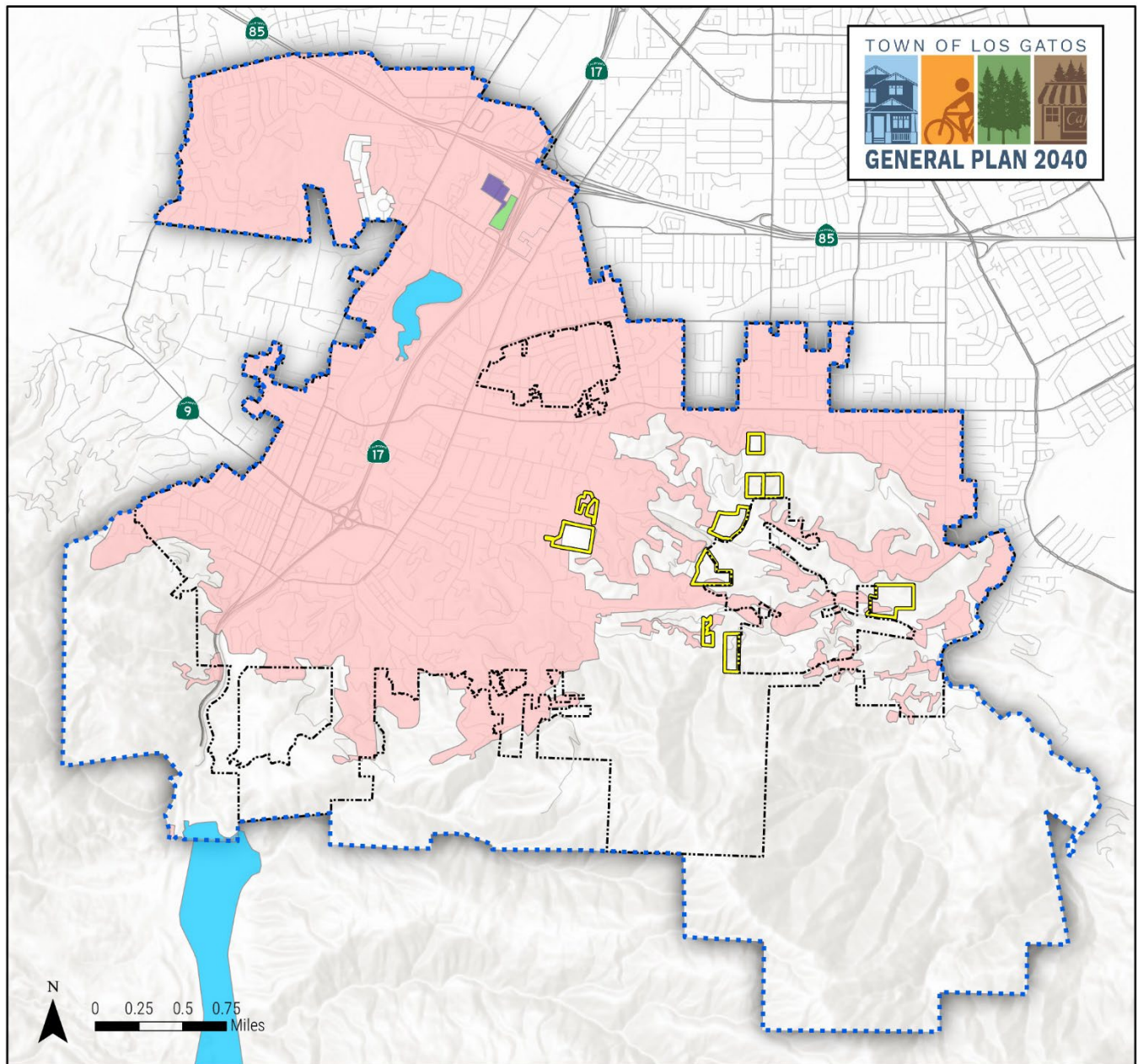
ENV-3.3

SUS

Williamson Act Lands

The Town will work with current landowners with properties under Williamson Act contracts to track renewal status and plan for future changes accordingly.

Figure 8-1 Land Under Williamson Act Contracts in Los Gatos



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Williamson Act Properties | Prime Farmland | Town of Los Gatos |
| Unique Farmland | Urban and Built-up Land | Planning Area/
Sphere of Influence |
| Water | | |

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8.3 Biological Resources

Los Gatos is ecologically diverse and includes a variety of terrain, from flat topography at the Santa Clara Valley edge to wooded hillsides of the Santa Cruz Mountains in the southern and eastern portion of the Town. Creeks and streams stemming from the southerly mountains bisect the area, which is bordered by riparian habitats. Vasona Lake is within the west side of Los Gatos, west of SR 17, while Lexington Reservoir is located southwest of Los Gatos adjacent to SR 17. Seasonal wetlands and marshes provide specialized habitat for numerous species. Figure 8-2 depicts vegetation and wildlife habitat distribution.

Los Gatos habitat types include oak woodland and forest land, riparian forestland, grassland and forbs, and wetlands and bodies of water. A few special status species have the potential to occur in Los Gatos including the California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, American peregrine falcon, and over a dozen other species. Even though these species are currently not active in Los Gatos, there are several areas within the Planning Area that include suitable critical habitat areas for these species.

The following goals and policies guide the conservation of biological resources.

ENV-4

Protect, conserve, and enhance natural and urban habitats and ecosystems to sustain the biodiversity and natural resources of Los Gatos. **SUS**

ENV-4.1

SUS

Ecosystem Protection

Protect and enhance public and private open space ecosystems in Los Gatos.

ENV-4.2

SUS

Open Space

Maintain and support a network of open space preserves that protects the urban and natural forest and offers all residents access to nature.

ENV-4.3

SUS

Habitat Management

Encourage management of private open space areas, agricultural land, and residential gardens as habitat that supports wildlife in a way that enhances that habitat, reinforces natural wildlife management, and is consistent with open space management plans.

ENV-5

Conserve and protect native plants and plant communities in Los Gatos and promote appropriate use of local, native plants in habitat restoration and landscaping. **SUS**

ENV-5.1

SUS

Use Native Plants

Require all development to use native plants or other appropriate non-invasive plants that are indigenous to Los Gatos and Santa Clara County to reduce maintenance and irrigation costs and the disturbance of adjacent natural habitat.

ENV-5.2

SUS

Special Status Native Plant Species Protection

Require public and private projects to protect special-status native plant species.

ENV-5.3

SUS

Impacts on Special Status Plants

Prohibit development that significantly depletes, damages, or alters existing special-status plants.

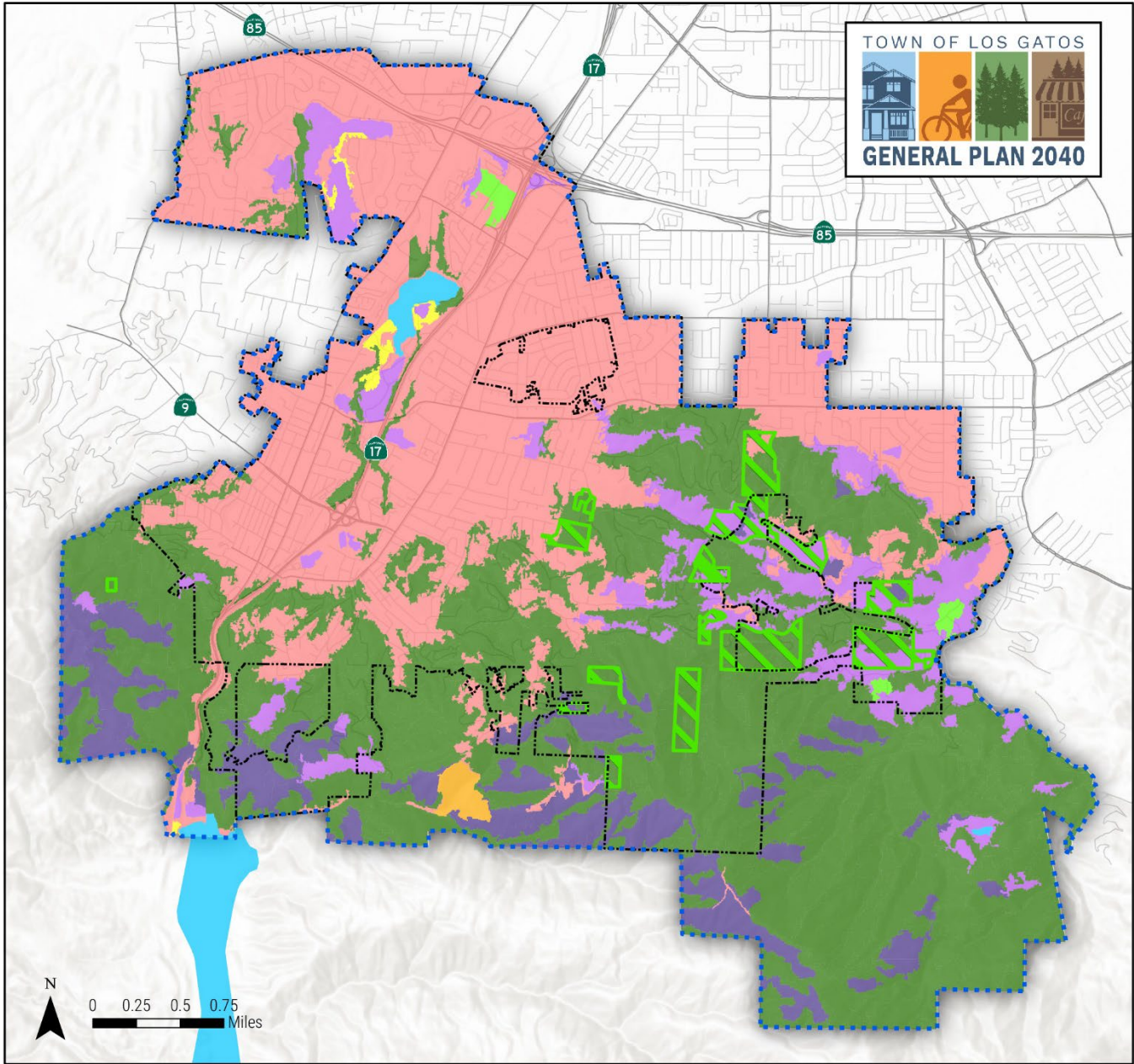
ENV-5.4

SUS

Prohibit Invasive Plant Species

Prohibit the use of invasive plant species listed by the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) for all new construction.

Figure 8-2 Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat Types



U.S. Forest Service

- Agriculture
- Barren (rock/soil/sand/snow)
- Hardwood forest/woodland
- Herbaceous
- Mixed conifer and hardwood forest/woodland

- Shrub
- Urban
- Water

Town of Los Gatos

- Agriculture Land Use Designation

- Town of Los Gatos
- Planning Area/ Sphere of Influence

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ENV-6	Protect wetlands and riparian corridors, including intermittent and ephemeral streams. SUS
ENV-6.1 SUS	Prevent Damage from Development Development shall not damage riparian areas, wetlands, and intermittent or ephemeral streams. See Figure 7-3 (Wetlands and Water Habitats).
ENV-6.2 SUS	Retain Natural Conditions Retain creek beds, riparian corridors, water courses, and associated vegetation in their natural state to assist groundwater percolation and prevent erosion, downstream sedimentation, and other degradation.
ENV-6.3 SUS	Riparian Corridors Require setbacks and measures as appropriate to protect riparian corridors.
ENV-6.4 SUS	Planting Native Plants Promote the planting of local native trees and shrubs where development occurs on land surrounding reservoirs and streams, especially adjacent to areas where banks or channels have been modified for flood protection.
ENV-7	Conserve and protect wildlife populations. SUS
ENV-7.1 SUS	Protecting Wildlife Ensure that public and private projects shall not significantly deplete, damage, or alter existing wildlife habitat or populations.
ENV-7.2 SUS	Coordination with State and Federal Agencies Coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other appropriate agencies to protect wildlife species and habitats.
ENV-7.3 SUS	Habitat and Movement Corridors Maintain wildlife habitat and movement corridors for native wildlife species, specific to Santa Clara County.
ENV-7.4 SUS	Limit Public Access Limit public access in areas that support rare wildlife populations and sensitive nesting and breeding sites.
ENV-7.5 SUS	Nesting Sites Conserve nesting sites in new development and within existing development unless a mitigation plan is approved.
ENV-7.6 SUS	Minimize Use of Herbicides and Pesticides Consider alternative methods prior to utilizing herbicides and pesticides on Town property as one tool within a comprehensive integrated pest management framework to minimize potential damage to native plants, birds, and other wildlife.

ENV-7.7

SUS

Herbicides and Pesticides Adjacent to Aquatic Habitats

Require that herbicides and pesticides used in areas adjacent to creeks and other water bodies are approved for use in aquatic habitats, working towards minimized potential damage to public health, native plants, birds, and other wildlife.

ENV-7.8

SUS

Require Open Space Dedications

Require open space dedications as a means to protect wildlife where necessary.

ENV-7.9

SUS

Conservation of Habitats

Conserve the habitats of native plants, specifically rare species within the Planning Area.

ENV-7.10

SUS

Bird Safe Design

Require new development to increase bird safety by reducing hazardous building and architectural elements, and including bird safe and lighting design.

ENV-7.11

SUS

Dark Skies

Require the design of building, street, landscape, and parking area lighting to improve safety, energy efficiency, protection of the night skies (dark sky protections), biological resources, and environmental soundness.

8.4 Air Quality

The air we breathe is a shared resource. In general, air pollution describes the introduction of harmful particles or molecules into the atmosphere. Air pollutants can cause harm to humans, animals, and plants that breathe in or absorb these materials. The amount of harm depends on the type and concentration of the pollutant. Criteria pollutants are the six principal pollutants harmful to public health and the environment for which the Environmental Protection Agency has set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The pollutants are carbon monoxide (CO), lead, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), ozone (O₃), particulate matter (PM), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂). Air pollution affects all Californians regardless of where they live or how they address the environmental in their daily lives. Polluted air damages our health, our agricultural industry, and our natural environment.

Los Gatos is in the Santa Clara Valley subregion of the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin and is under the jurisdiction of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District). The California Air Resources Board compiles air quality data from a regional air quality monitoring network. In general, air quality in the Los Gatos area is like that of the greater Bay Area, with ozone and particulate matter being the greatest concerns. In Los Gatos, vehicular emissions, waste disposal, cleaning and industrial products and processes are the largest sources of air pollution and odor.

Sensitive Receptors and Land Uses

Sensitive populations, or sensitive receptors, are persons more susceptible to the health effects of air pollution than the population generally. Locations where high concentrations of sensitive receptors gather are considered sensitive locations. Examples include residential areas, facilities that serve older adults, schools, daycare centers, hospitals, places of worship, and parks.

The following goal and policies will guide the management of air quality.

ENV-8

Improve the air quality in Los Gatos. SUS

ENV-8.1

SUS

Air Quality Standards

Federal, State, and regional air quality goals, policies, standards, and requirements shall be addressed during environmental review for local land use and development decisions. Applicable

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standards or requirements, if not already in the proposed plans, shall be incorporated as conditions of approval.

ENV-8.2

SUS

Support Regional Efforts to Reduce Air Pollution

Coordinate with and support the Air District, MTC, State, and Federal planning efforts and programs aimed at reducing air pollution, including ongoing monitoring and management of major pollutants affecting Los Gatos and the region, with a particular focus on PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ (Particulate Matter).

ENV-8.3

SUS

Decrease Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

Require decreases to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) whenever the environmental review document concludes that the traffic generated by a development project would result in adverse impacts from air and noise pollution. Decreases in VMT could be achieved through transportation demand management (TDM) programs.

ENV-8.4

SUS

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Require installation of electric vehicle charging stations as a ratio of total required parking for new and redeveloped commercial, multi-family, residential subdivision, and condominium projects.

ENV-8.5

SUS

Education Programs to Reduce Particulate Emissions from Vehicles

Support education programs that promote the reduction of particulate emissions from vehicles, such as reducing idling time, as well as reducing overall VMT.

ENV-8.6

SUS

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Recommendations

Support MTC recommendations for the reduction of auto pollutants including encouraging the use of clean, alternative energy sources for transportation, wherever practical.

ENV-8.7

SUS

Reduce Effects of High Air Pollutant Concentrations

Require developments to incorporate site planning techniques that reduce exposure of people to the impacts of high air pollutants from adjacent roadways.

ENV-8.8

SUS

Reduce Emissions from Commercial Sources

Reduce particulate emissions from dry cleaning, light manufacturing, wood burning, and landscape maintenance.

ENV-8.9

SUS

Air Pollution Impacts During Construction

Require project proponents to prepare and implement a construction management plan that incorporates Best Available Control Measures and all best management practices in accordance with the Air District standards to reduce criteria pollutants.

8.5 Climate Change/Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Climate change is a global problem caused by the cumulative warming effects of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) emissions. Its effects are seen across California as evidenced in the rise in average temperatures and extreme heat days, increased variability and intensity of precipitation, an increase in the length and severity of droughts, and the increased frequency and severity of wildfires. Governments at all levels, non-governmental agencies, and private citizens and businesses are now acting to mitigate GHG emissions as quickly as possible to reduce or avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change. The Los Gatos area is projected to have increases in riverine flooding, wildfire, extreme heat, and drought as a result of climate change. The increased wildfire risk is addressed in detail in the Hazards and Safety Element.

GHGs are the result of both natural and human activities. Without human intervention, the earth maintains an approximate balance between the emission of GHGs into the atmosphere and its storage in oceans and terrestrial

ecosystems. The consumption of fossil fuels for power generation and transportation, forest fires, decomposition of organic waste, and industrial processes are the primary sources of GHG emissions.

The State's target is to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, in line with the Town's most recent Sustainability Plan. The Town of Los Gatos adopted Sustainability Plan includes targets, strategies, actions, and measures to reduce GHG emissions, as well as an inventory of communitywide GHG emissions. Transportation was the largest source of emissions (65 percent of total emissions), followed by residential building energy (18 percent), and commercial and industrial building energy (12 percent). Emissions associated with solid waste, water and wastewater, and stationary equipment accounted for approximately five percent of emissions combined. The 2030 State target ensures that successes in the first 20 years of the century will continue and that a full range of initiatives can be implemented to contribute to clean technology and related jobs.

Addressing climate change also requires adaptation. Adaptation is preparing for climate change impacts that are expected to occur by making adjustments in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects that are aimed at minimizing harm or taking advantage of beneficial opportunities.

The following goals and policies will guide the management of GHG emissions and address the climate change impacts affecting the region.

ENV-9

Support local and regional efforts in the Town's response to climate change.

SUS

ENV-9.1

Reduce Town Contribution to GHG Emissions

SUS

Take action to achieve target reductions in GHG emission levels from operation of Town facilities and services to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

ENV-9.2

Include Adaptation Measures in all Planning Documents

SUS

Require all planning documents to incorporate newly identified and revised adaptation measures consistently, including measures in the Hazards and Safety Element, the Sustainability Plan, and the Emergency Operation Plan.

ENV-9.3

Support Climate Change Initiatives

SUS

Support initiatives, legislation, and actions to respond to climate change.

ENV-9.4

Raise Climate Change Impacts Awareness

SUS

Collaborate with local organizations, such as health care providers, public health advocates, and fire prevention organizations, to raise awareness about climate change impacts and to disseminate public emergency preparedness and response information as it relates to climate change.

ENV-9.5

Address Heat Island Effects

SUS

Encourage development to address "heat island" effects by including cool roofs, cool pavements, and strategically placed shade trees.

ENV-9.6

Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Use

SUS

Promote energy conservation in business and residential uses by encouraging installation of fixture and appliance upgrades, installation of solar panels, and other retrofits to existing structures.

ENV-9.7

Employer Incentive Programs

SUS

Support employer incentive programs for carpooling and the use of other forms of alternative transportation, as well as offering plant-based menu options.

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ENV-9.8

SUS

Local Employment Opportunities

Promote local employment opportunities to reduce consumption of fuel used for commuting.

ENV-9.9

SUS

HC

Carpool, Walk, Bike to School

Work with local school districts to encourage carpooling, walking, and biking to schools.

ENV-9.10

SUS

Encourage and Incentivize Alternative Fuels

Support the use of non-polluting fuels by encouraging the inclusion of facilities for alternative fuels in new public and private developments and by offering incentives to encourage retrofits.

ENV-9.11

SUS

Green Building

Foster awareness and encourage adoption of green building practices that include the design and development of environmentally responsible commercial and residential development and retrofits.

ENV-9.12

SUS

GreenPoint Guidelines

Continue to require that all remodeled homes and new home construction comply with the adopted GreenPoint Guidelines to reduce GHG emissions reduction.

ENV-9.13

SUS

Regional Green Building Programs

Coordinate with other local governments, special districts, nonprofits, and other public organizations to share resources, achieve economies of scale, and develop green building policies and programs that are optimized on a regional scale.

ENV-9.14

SUS

Exceeding Title 24 for Large Developments

Require new residential developments with more than 20 dwelling units an acre and new or remodeled commercial, industrial, and office developments greater than 15,000 square feet to exceed the Title 24 requirements by 10 percent.

ENV-9.15

SUS

Sustainability Plan Requirements

Continue to require that all new and remodeled developments incorporate sustainable building practices and site design methods as listed in the Sustainability Plan.

ENV-10

Become a zero-waste Town through encouraging sustainable procurement, extended producer responsibility, and innovative strategies. SUS

ENV-10.1

SUS

Move Toward Zero Waste

Encourage practices that take the Town closer to being a zero waste municipality through:

- Limiting the amount of waste sent to landfills;
- Promote and implement programs that reduce packaging and microplastics that get into the environment;
- Promoting a reduce and reuse first approach to consumer waste; and
- Providing opportunities for composting, safe disposal of hazardous waste and bulky items, and other strategies, including enhancing construction and demolition debris recycling programs to increase diversion, where possible.

ENV-10.2

SUS

Energy-Efficient Town Operations

Continue to encourage Town operations to pursue and model waste reduction and recycling methodologies in Town facilities for the community.

ENV-10.3

SUS

Reusable/Recyclable Packaging

Encourage or, where feasible, require local businesses to use bags, packaging, and other materials that can be reused or recycled.

ENV-10.4

SUS

Recycled-Content Construction Materials

Encourage the use of recycled-content construction materials in new construction that have low production energy costs for building materials, hard surfaces, and non-plant landscaping.

ENV-10.5

SUS

Reuse and Rehabilitate Existing Buildings

Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing buildings when appropriate and feasible to reduce waste, and conserve resources and energy.

ENV-10.6

SUS

Life-Cycle Costing

Incorporate a “life-cycle costing” approach into Town purchasing considerations that takes into account long-term cost savings from energy efficient products.

ENV-10.7

SUS

Recycling Areas in Residential Developments

Require recycling and composting facilities in all new single-family and multi-family residential developments along with other waste-reduction resources.

8.6 Energy

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) distributes electricity throughout Los Gatos, with supplies purchased from Silicon Valley Clean Energy (SVCE). PG&E supplies natural gas to the community as well. The Town is committed to its partnership with other local communities under the umbrella of SVCE. Through this partnership, Los Gatos residents and businesses receive carbon-free electricity at lower rates than those that arise from fossil fuel consumption. SVCE works to innovate and implement new clean energy programs and presents many of these innovations at community meetings, Earth Day events, and presentations to businesses. SVCE's 2020 Community Benefits Summary indicates Los Gatos achieved the following results:

- \$813,000 in on-bill savings for Los Gatos SVCE customers;
- 14,700 households and businesses served;
- 99 percent reduction in electric utility-related emissions (34,897,000 pounds greenhouse gas emissions avoided by providing clean energy); and
- \$29,900 in cash payments to customers for generating surplus solar energy.

Achieving these goals adds to the overall GHG reduction strategy, with a focus on lowering dependence on carbon-based fuels and energy sources. Energy efficiency involves a careful balance of assessing energy sources, educating the public on home and business renewable energy use, implementing energy efficiency strategies, and encouraging and incentivizing widespread and ongoing implementation of those strategies.

The following goal and policies will guide energy demand and efficiency.

ENV-11

Source clean, efficient energy supplies from cost-effective, renewable sources.

SUS

ENV-11.1

SUS

Carbon-Neutral Energy

Support SCVE to continue to procure carbon-neutral energy for long-term and short-term supplies, including renewable resources.

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

ENV-11.2 Energy Efficiency in Municipal Facilities

Invest in cost-effective energy efficiency and energy conservation programs in municipal facilities.

ENV-11.3 Future Demand Reduction

SUS

Explore cost-effective, reliable, and feasible energy efficiency and demand reduction opportunities and continue to use the Sustainability Plan to include education programs for these opportunities.

ENV-11.4 Conservation and Reduction

SUS

Maximize the conservation and efficient use of energy in existing and new residences, businesses, and municipal buildings in Los Gatos.

ENV-11.5 Solar Systems

SUS

Support the maximum economic use of solar electric (photovoltaic) systems on-site to augment the renewable energy portfolio available to new development, businesses, and municipal facilities.

ENV-11.6 Organic Waste Recycling

SUS

Comply with SB 1383 regulations to maximize energy recovery from organic materials such as yard trimmings, food waste, and other compostable resources.

8.7 Cultural and Historical Resources

Cultural resources are most frequently identified with prehistoric (archaeological) or historic resources. Archaeological resources refer to the material remains produced by human beings (e.g., artifacts, structures), whether intentionally or accidentally. The scientific study of these remains can lead to identification of activities, types of adaptation to the environment, and changes in activities and organization that groups of people in the past experienced. Furthermore, these remains often have special significance to Native Americans, ethnic groups, special interest groups (e.g., avocational archaeologists), and the public.

Cultural resources can include both physical features and non-renewable, nonmaterial resources such as cognitive systems (including meanings and values attached to items of material culture, biota, and the physical environment), religion and world views, traditional or customary behavior patterns, kinship and social organization, and folklore. Goals, policies, and programs related to Native American cultural resources can be found in Section 7.8, Tribal Cultural Resources.

Historical resources refer to the period following European contact. These resources include historic event or activity sites, historic archaeological sites, architecture and other significant properties, documents and other sources of historical information, and objects of material culture. Historical resources in Los Gatos include the Forbes Flour Mill and Mill Annex, the Kotani-En Estate and Garden, the Town's first firehouse, the Los Gatos Historic Commercial District, the McCullagh-Jones and Yung See San Fong historic homes, Town documented historic residences, and four designated residential historic districts.

The Los Gatos Public Library houses an archive of cultural documents, including photographs, newspapers, books, and other resources that document the rich and varied history of Los Gatos, its settlement and subsequent development. The collection developed from a collaborative effort between the Library and the New Museum of Los Gatos (NUMU) and included donations in the form of money, time, equipment, and archive materials from more than 100 individuals and 20 companies, organizations, clubs, and associations.



Goals and policies concerning historic districts are covered in Section 3.6 (Special Planning Areas) in the Community Design Element.

The following goals and policies will guide the preservation and conservation of archaeological and cultural resources.

ENV-12

Protect Los Gatos's archaeological and cultural resources to maintain and enhance a unique sense of place.

ENV-12.1

Evaluate Archaeological and Cultural Resources

Evaluate archaeological and/or cultural resources early in the development review process through consultation with interested parties and the use of contemporary professional techniques in archaeology, ethnography, and architectural history.

ENV-12.2

Protect Archaeological Resources

Protect archaeological resources, including natural land formations, sacred sites, historic habits, and remains of settlements in place before Los Gatos was founded.

ENV-12.3

Archaeologically and Culturally Significant Structures

Ensure the preservation, restoration, and appropriate use of archaeological and/or culturally significant structures and sites.

ENV-12.4

Human Remains

Treat with respect and dignity any human remains discovered during implementation of public and private projects within the Town.

ENV-12.5

Uncovered Cultural Resources

Require that if cultural resources, including archaeological or paleontological resources, are uncovered during grading or other on-site excavation activities, construction shall stop until appropriate mitigation is implemented.

ENV-12.6

Burial Sites

Encourage development to avoid impacts to burial sites by designing or clustering development to avoid archaeological deposits that may contain human remains.

ENV-13

Preserve and protect Los Gatos's historic buildings, sites, and resources.

ENV-13.1

Historic Resource Preservation

Preserve non-municipal resources with historic merit, including residences and sites listed or eligible for listing in the State or Federal registers.

ENV-13.2

Municipal Historic Resources

Preserve significant historic resources owned by the Town of Los Gatos while allowing them to be altered to meet contemporary needs consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

ENV-13.3

Funding

SUS

Seek State and Federal funding for preservation of buildings of historical merit, both listed and potentially eligible for listing. Consider partnerships between public and private entities for capital and program improvements. Encourage owners of potential historic resources to adapt and rehabilitate these buildings through participation in State and Federal tax credit programs.

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

ENV-13.4 Historic Commercial District

Reinforce the scale and character of the Los Gatos Historic Commercial District by promoting significant buildings, including regulating signage to be in keeping with the historic style and aesthetic of the district.

ENV-13.5 Proposed Alterations

If a proposed project would substantially affect sites or structures of special character, or potential historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest that has not been evaluated for inclusion in the State or Federal registers, part of the plan review shall include consideration of eligibility prior to issuance of demolition or alterations permits. Minor exterior improvements that do not affect the architectural integrity of potentially significant buildings (as determined by the Historic Preservation Committee) shall be exempt from more extensive review. Examples of minor improvements may include repair or replacement in-kind that do not alter character-defining features.

ENV-13.6 Adaptive Reuse

SUS

Promote adaptive reuse of older buildings and allow compatible non-conforming uses for the life of historic buildings.

ENV-13.7 History Archives

Continue to support library, museum, private, and non-profit efforts to maintain historic resource collections, including collaborative efforts to acquire funding, educate the community, and provide access for researchers.

ENV-13.8 Increase Historical and Cultural Awareness

Support a community sense of stewardship for historic and cultural resources through supporting talks, tours, and other programs that increase awareness and promote Los Gatos as a destination with historic cultural resources and through including Indigenous People in the conversation and planning.

8.8 Tribal Cultural Resources

Los Gatos is in an area once occupied by Indigenous People, which extends from the point where the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers flow into the San Francisco Bay to Point Sur, with the interior Coastal Ranges most likely constituting the inland boundary. Before colonization, Indigenous People lived in base camps of tule-reed houses and seasonal specialized camps. Indigenous People ate food gained by hunting, gathering, and fishing. Mussels were particularly important to their diet, as well as sea mammals and acorns.

Seven Franciscan missions were built in Indigenous People's territory in the late 1700s, and all Indigenous People were eventually forced into the mission system. After the establishment of the missions, the population of Indigenous People of this area was decimated from roughly 10,000 people in 1770 to 1,300 in 1814. In 1973, the population of Indigenous People of this area was estimated at fewer than 300 after what is widely cited as a genocide. The descendants of Indigenous People of this area united in 1971 and have since arranged political and cultural organizations to revitalize, maintain, and pass on their culture.

The following goal and policies will guide preservation and protection of tribal cultural resources.

ENV-14

Protect and respect Los Gatos's tribal cultural resources.

ENV-14.1

Tribal Consultation

Require that local Native American tribes are involved early and often on potential disturbance, recovery, and preservation of tribal cultural resources, including development of strong consultation protocols with appropriate Native American tribe(s), as required by California Senate Bill 18 and Assembly Bill 52.

ENV-14.2

Tribal Prohibitions

Accommodate tribal concerns when the tribe has a religious prohibition against revealing precise information about the location or previous practice at a sacred site.

8.9 Geology and Soils

Los Gatos is in the central portion of the Coast Ranges Physiographic Province of California, a series of coastal mountain chains that run parallel to central California. The geology in Los Gatos is characterized by hilly terrain situated on the lower slope of the Santa Cruz Mountains down to the valley floor. The potential for erosion generally increases with steepness of slope, rainfall, and in areas where fire or grading has occurred and where the protective soil and/or vegetation cover has been removed. Due to the varied topography of Los Gatos, the erosion potential within the Town also varies by location. The potential for erosion in Los Gatos is highest in the eastern, southern, and southwestern areas of the Town. Erosion potential decreases toward the center of Town and is minimal in the flat areas just east of the SR 17 corridor. In addition, erosion potential is high to very high in the areas at the north end of the Los Gatos Creek corridor.

Soils in Los Gatos differ in texture, depth, and drainage, all of which are determined largely by the environments in which the soils formed. Soils in the northern and central urban areas of Town, primarily on the valley floor, contain a substantial amount of sand with clay and, to a lesser degree, silt. Soils on the hillsides and mountains on the east and south portions of Town are approximately half clay mixed with substantial sand, and with less silt. The primary soil types in the Los Gatos area are clay and clay loam. Soils in Los Gatos are well-drained, exhibit rapid to very rapid runoff and tend to have moderate permeability. The more developed portions of the Town may have been disturbed or contain imported fill materials, and therefore may not be accurately described by soil surveys.



Goals and policies concerning geological hazards are covered in Section 9.3 (Geological and Seismic Hazards) in the Hazards and Safety Element.

The following goal and policies will guide conservation and protection of soil resources.

ENV-15

Conserve and protect soil resources of the Town. **SUS**

ENV-15.1

Erosion Control Plans

SUS

Require all new developments in areas subject to soil erosion and slippage to provide an effective erosion control plan to minimize soil erosion. The erosion control plans shall be implemented prior to construction operations and maintained throughout the construction process.

ENV-15.2

Minimize Grading

SUS

Require grading permits to ensure that the grading of slopes and sites proposed for development will be minimized.

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

ENV-15.3

SUS

Soil Protection

Protect soils in urban and natural areas, recognizing that healthy soils are necessary to filter water, sustain plants and animals, and support building structures.

8.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Maintaining water quality and availability is a high priority and a complex challenge that becomes more critical as supplies become more uncertain due to climate change and a growing population. Goals and policies in this section address the quality and reliability of the Town's long-term water supply, including during periods of drought. To maintain water quality, surface water and groundwater must be protected from the impacts of past and future development using methods such as low-impact development requirements and the careful regulation of sub-surface dewatering. The Town supports the efforts of regulatory bodies, such as the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, the agency that controls discharge to San Francisco Bay from stormwater and other sources. The San Francisco Bay Region Municipal Regional Stormwater NPDES Permit (MRP) requires the Town of Los Gatos to implement programs that reduce urban runoff pollution. The MRP regulates stormwater discharges into local creeks and the San Francisco Bay to protect water quality. The Town participates in the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP), along with twelve other cities and towns, the County of Santa Clara, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District to implement the requirements of the MRP. As required by the MRP, the Town has developed a Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Plan that describes how the Town will gradually transform its urban landscape and storm drainage systems from "gray" to "green"; that is, supplement traditional storm drain infrastructure, where stormwater runoff flows directly from impervious surfaces into storm drains and receiving waters, with a more resilient, sustainable system that reduces and slows runoff by dispersing it to vegetated areas, promotes infiltration and evapotranspiration, collects runoff for non-potable uses, and treats runoff using biotreatment and other GSI practices. The control of wastewater and stormwater is discussed in more detail in the Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element.

Surface Hydrology

Wetlands and water habitats cover approximately 75 acres in the Los Gatos Planning Area and include ponds and reservoirs. Vasona Lake and the northern tip of the Lexington Reservoir are the two main open water bodies in the Town and its SOI. Several of these water habitats in the form of ponds, creeks, and lakes flow through Town and other adjacent communities before being deposited into the San Francisco Bay. Cherry Springs Pond in Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (OSP) is also open water habitat. Seasonal wetlands, marshes, and other wetland habitats occur throughout Los Gatos in grasslands, shrublands, and woodland/forest communities, as well as along creeks and the edges of some open water bodies.

Creeks in Los Gatos include perennial and ephemeral creek channels, and aboveground and underground reaches. Most of these creeks are considered part of the Guadalupe River watershed. Los Gatos Creek is one of the primary creeks in the area, flowing south to north into and out of Vasona Lake. Figure 8-3 depicts these habitats in the planning area.

Natural Drainage Systems

The Town has several surface water channels within its limits: Los Gatos Creek, San Tomas Aquinas Creek, and Smith Creek flow south to north through the Town, and Ross Creek flows in a northeasterly direction. A large valley in Los Gatos drains northward to the San Francisco Bay by means of tributaries that include Coyote Creek, the Guadalupe River, and Los Gatos Creek. Other unnamed natural water courses are also located inside Town limits. An extensive man-made storm drainage system including pipe networks, ditches, and culverts also serves to drain stormwater runoff into the natural creeks that cross the Town.

Groundwater

Los Gatos is in the Santa Clara Valley Groundwater Sub-basin (groundwater sub-basin), a structural trough that parallels the northwest trending Coast Ranges. The groundwater sub-basin is approximately 22 miles long and 15 miles wide, with a surface area of 225 square miles (Figure 8-4). The groundwater sub-basin receives approximately 15 inches of rainfall per year. In the northern areas of the groundwater sub-basin, a series of clay layers results in a low permeability zone. The southern area is an unconfined zone, or forebay, where the clay layer does not restrict recharge.

Groundwater Management

Valley Water manages the groundwater sub-basin with the primary objectives to recharge the basin, conserve water, increase water supply, and prevent waste or reduction of the water supply. Historically, over-extraction of the groundwater sub-basin has resulted in occurrences of subsidence in Santa Clara County. Subsidence occurs when underground water levels drop and clay layers compact, resulting in the sinking of the ground surface and a loss of aquifer capacity. To avoid any further subsidence Valley Water works to maintain the sub-basin by augmenting natural percolation of rainfall and local stream runoff via managed aquifer recharge using local and imported surface water. Valley Water's managed recharge program includes 18 major recharge systems with in-stream and off-stream facilities. In addition to directly replenishing groundwater, Valley Water reduces the need for groundwater pumping through treated and untreated surface water deliveries, water conservation, and recycled water programs.

Based on these efforts, permanent subsidence was effectively halted around 1970, and groundwater levels recovered to sustainable levels. In 2019, Valley Water's Groundwater Management Plan was approved by the Department of Water Resources as an Alternative to a Groundwater Sustainability Plan for Sustainable Groundwater Management Act compliance. While groundwater levels and storage decline during droughts, Valley Water's comprehensive groundwater management activities provide for subsequent recovery, and groundwater in the sub-basin is sustainably managed.

Figure 8-3 Wetlands and Water Habitats

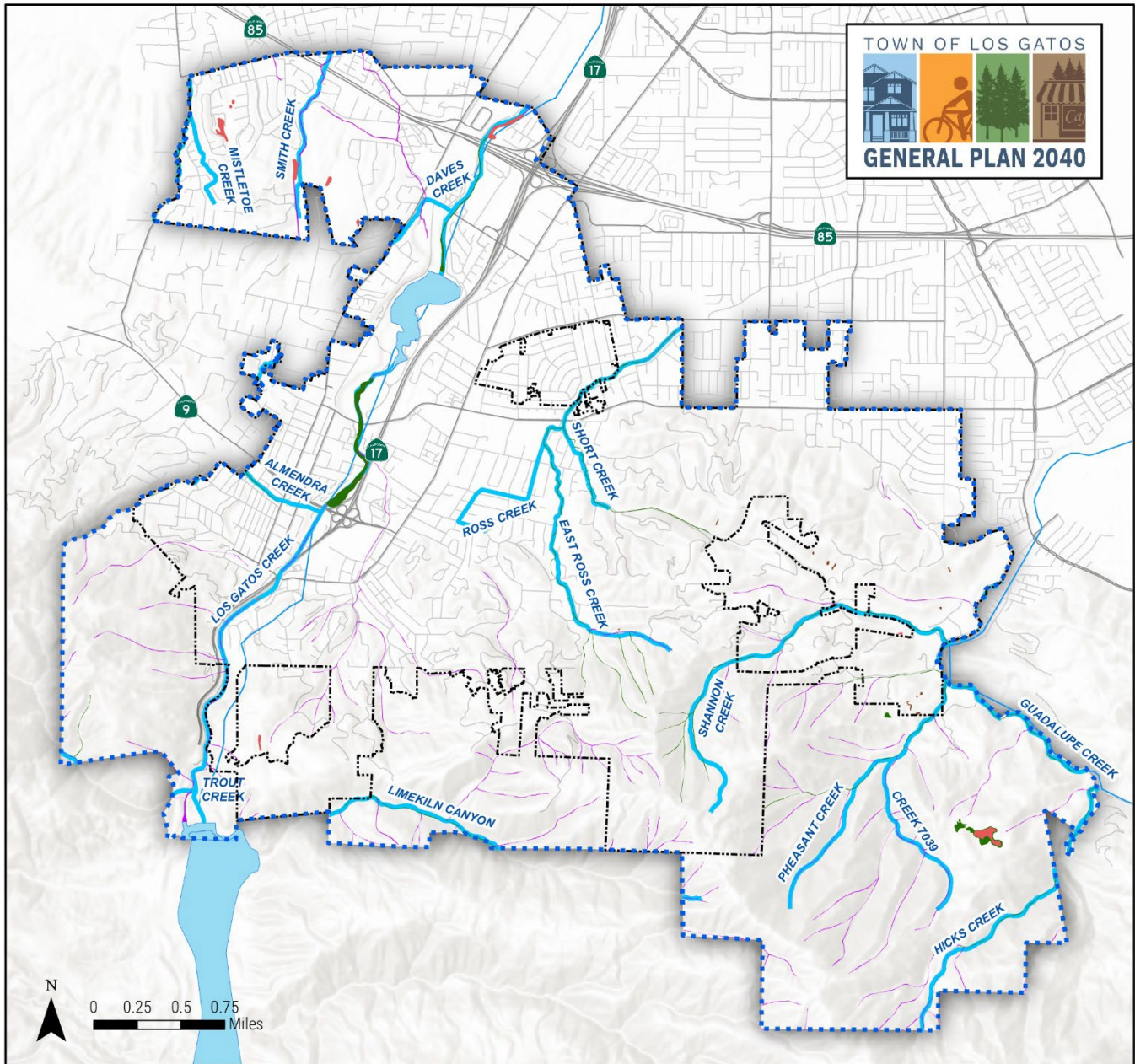
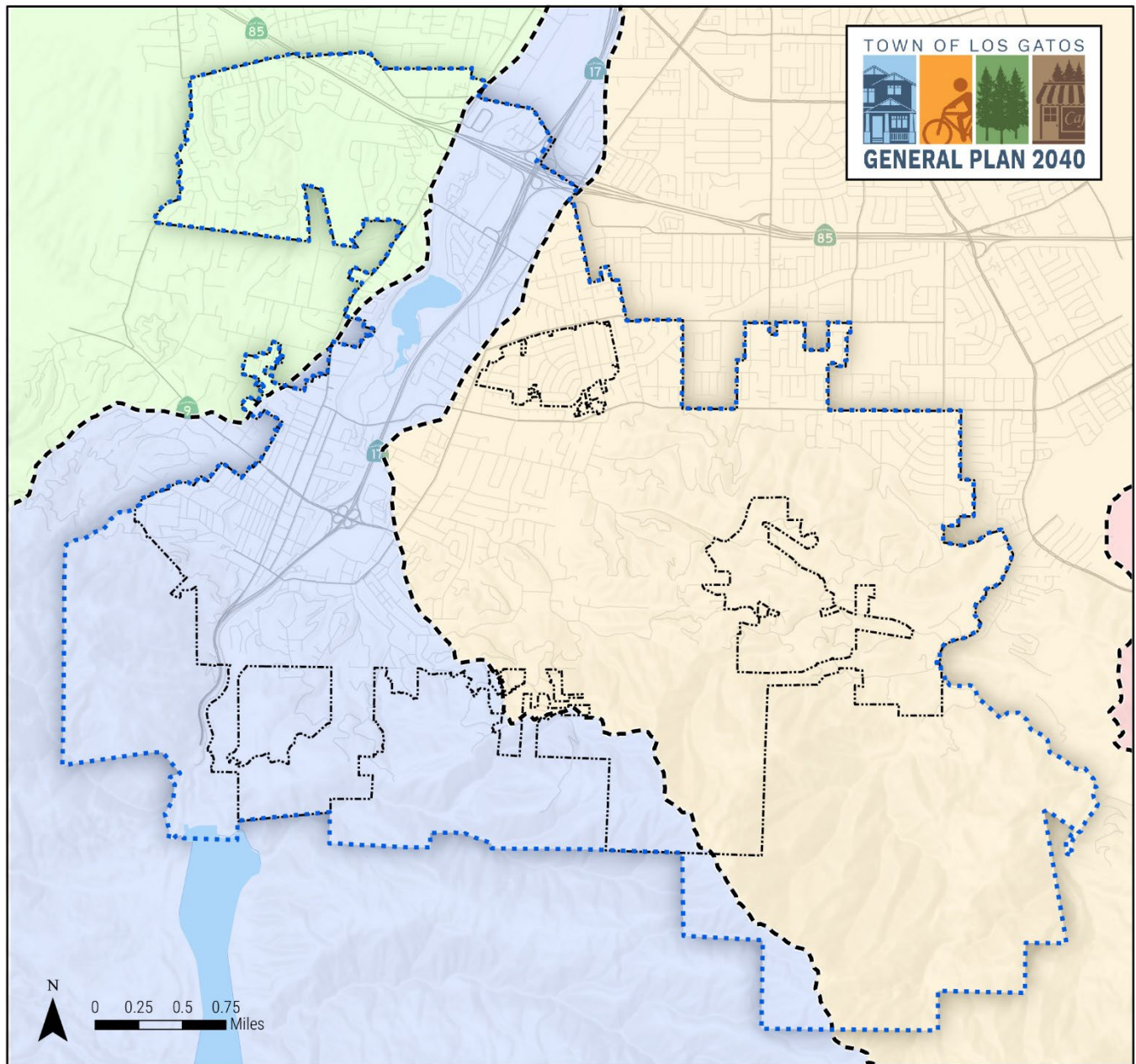


Figure 8-4 Planning Watershed



- | | | |
|-------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|
| Alamitos Creek | Lake | Town of Los Gatos |
| Los Gatos Creek | | Planning Area/
Sphere of Influence |
| San Tomas Aquinas Creek | | |
| Guadalupe River | | |

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

Groundwater Quality

Groundwater quality in the Santa Clara Valley sub-basin is generally good. Natural interactions between water, the atmosphere, rock minerals, and surface water influence groundwater quality in the groundwater sub-basin, but man-made compounds such as nitrogen-based fertilizer, solvents, and fuel products can also affect groundwater quality. The most significant threat to water quality is from commercial water pollutants such as those from automobile uses, dry cleaners, and underground storage tanks, although some wells may be vulnerable to pollutants such as metal plating and finishing, electrical and electronics manufacturing, and chemical/petroleum processing.

A few water quality problems have been detected in the sub-basin. High mineral salt concentrations have been identified in the upper aquifer zone along San Francisco Bay, the lower aquifer zone underlying Palo Alto. Elevated nitrate concentrations are sporadically observed in the Santa Clara Valley Sub-basin. However, drinking water standards are met at public water supply wells without the use of treatment methods beyond disinfection. Valley Water and public water suppliers conduct extensive monitoring of groundwater quality to understand conditions and trends and work with regulatory agencies to protect groundwater quality.

The following goals and policies will guide the preservation and conservation of water resources.

ENV-16

Protect and conserve watersheds and water quality. **SUS**

ENV-16.1

SUS

Avoid Water Contamination from New Development

Require all applicants to demonstrate that new development will not contaminate surface water and/or groundwater.

ENV-16.2

SUS

Conserve Land Contiguous to Reservoirs and Stream Channels

Apply land use regulations, scenic easements, or other appropriate measures to keep the maximum amount of land immediately contiguous to reservoirs and stream channels undeveloped and undisturbed.

ENV-16.3

SUS

Valley Water

Cooperate with Valley Water and other agencies to protect watersheds, groundwater, and riparian habitats from degradation.

ENV-16.4

SUS

Conserve Existing Creeks

Conserve existing creeks and avoid disturbances, including fencing, lighting, structures, hydrological barriers, and roads, to these areas.

ENV-16.5

SUS

Creek Dedication

Require that the approval of a development adjacent to a designated creek includes a condition that the creek be dedicated to the Town in fee with a maintenance easement granted to Valley Water.

ENV-16.6

SUS

Alternative Paving Materials and Designs

Encourage alternative paving materials and designs to limit driveways, parking areas, and parking lots in all zones. Examples include, but are not limited to, pervious paving material, and “ribbon strip” driveways, which have pavement in tire areas and grass or gravel in the middle.

ENV-16.7

SUS

Parking Lot Drainage

Implement bioswales and other innovations so runoff from parking lots drain into landscaped areas and rainwater percolates into the ground.

ENV-16.8

SUS

Open Space and Recreation Prioritization

Require that open space and recreation is the priority land use designation for lands immediately adjacent to reservoirs, creeks, and streams.

ENV-16.9

SUS

Stormwater Runoff

Reduce pollution in urban runoff from residential, commercial, industrial, municipal, and transportation land use activities.

ENV-16.10

SUS

Street-Sweeping

Conduct regular street-sweeping to collect trash and road surface pollutants before they enter stormwater drainage systems.

ENV-16.11

SUS

Sustainable Landscaping Practices

Support low water landscaping practices and limited artificial fertilizer and pesticide application on public and private properties.

ENV-17

Protect and conserve water resources and infrastructure in a manner that sustains plant and animal life, supports urban activities and recreation, and protects public health and safety. SUS

ENV-17.1

SUS

Residential Water Conservation

Implement and maintain cost-effective, Town-wide water conservation and efficiency programs for all residents through education, rebates, assistance programs, and building requirements.

ENV-17.2

SUS

Commercial and Business Conservation

Encourage owners of commercial and industrial properties to conserve water by replacing inefficient plumbing fixtures, installing drought-tolerant and water-wise landscaping, and harvesting rainwater for irrigation.

ENV-17.3

SUS

Human, Plant, and Animal Water Needs

Manage the water supply to address human use as well as that needed to sustain plant and animal life.

ENV-17.4

SUS

Resiliency During Drought

Establish a varied approach to ensuring a resilient water supply and its management in Los Gatos during significant periods of drought.

ENV-17.5

SUS

Rainwater Retention

Retain and use rainwater on municipal facility sites, to the extent possible. Encourage rainwater harvesting and irrigation use in commercial and residential uses. Ensure that all development projects in Los Gatos maximize opportunities to filter, infiltrate, store, and reuse or evaporate stormwater runoff onsite.

ENV-17.6

SUS

Groundwater

Participate in the regulation of groundwater use to protect it as a natural resource and conserve it for potential use during extended drought.

ENV-17.7

SUS

Subsurface Water

Conserve and maintain subsurface water resources by exploring ways to reduce the impacts of development dewatering and other excavation activities.

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

ENV-17.8

SUS

Low-Impact Development

Encourage Low-Impact Development (LID) measures to limit the amount of impervious surface in new development and redevelopment to maintain or increase the retention, treatment, and infiltration of urban stormwater runoff from pre-development conditions. LID measures should also apply to major remodeling projects and to public and recreation projects where possible.

8.11 Noise

While noise is frequently an integral part of daily living, exposure to excessive noise is considered a detriment to well-being and contributes to undue stress, sleep and concentration disturbance, and other health issues. There are many sources of noise in Los Gatos including vehicular traffic, operations at commercial and industrial uses, and construction noise.

Los Gatos has established outdoor noise limits, which represent long-range community goals related to noise exposure for different land use designations within the Town. These are specified under Goal ENV-18. In addition, the Town of Los Gatos Municipal Code establishes decibel ranges for noise in different zones as well as when and how construction activities may occur, with the goal of reducing any short-term impacts from construction noise.

Future Noise Contours

The noise environment in Los Gatos is not expected to significantly increase as a result of the implementation of the 2040 General Plan. However, vehicular traffic noise, the dominant source throughout the Town, would slightly increase as a result of additional traffic within the Town along local streets and major through routes, including SR 17 and 85. Sources of non-transportation noise are not anticipated to substantially increase in the community with compliance with the Town's Noise Ordinance and implementation of the goals, policies, and implementation programs included herein. Noise contours for projected conditions within Los Gatos at 2040 General Plan buildout are provided on Figure 8-5 in terms of the Day-Night Average Level (Ldn).



These statements on future noise levels (highlighted above) require the completion of the traffic modelling of the proposed land use diagram for confirmation. These statements will be updated following completion of the traffic and noise models for the General Plan update.

The following goals and policies address noise in Los Gatos.

ENV-18

Consider existing and future noise levels when making land use decisions in order to protect people from exposure to excessive noise levels, as defined for each land use type. Particular attention will be given to protecting noise sensitive land uses.

ENV-18.1

Acoustical Analysis Requirement

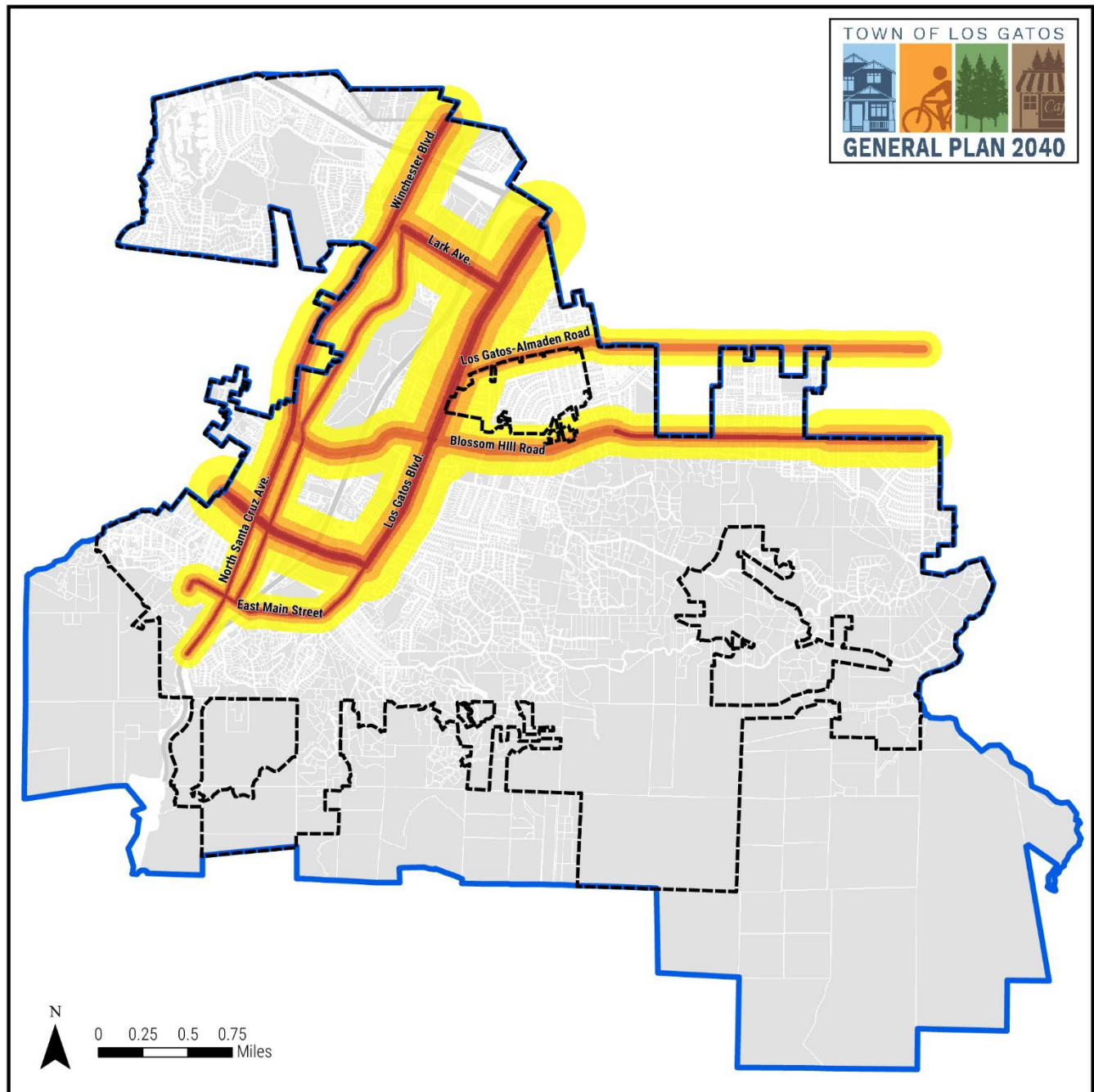
Applicants for proposed new non-residential development projects shall submit an acoustical analysis prepared by a licensed acoustician for their project as part of the environmental review process.

ENV-18.2

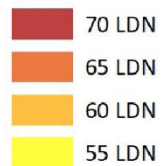
Indoor Noise Level Standards

Require all interior residential noise levels to be 45 dB or less, as specified in the Town's Noise Ordinance.

Figure 8-5 Future Noise Contours



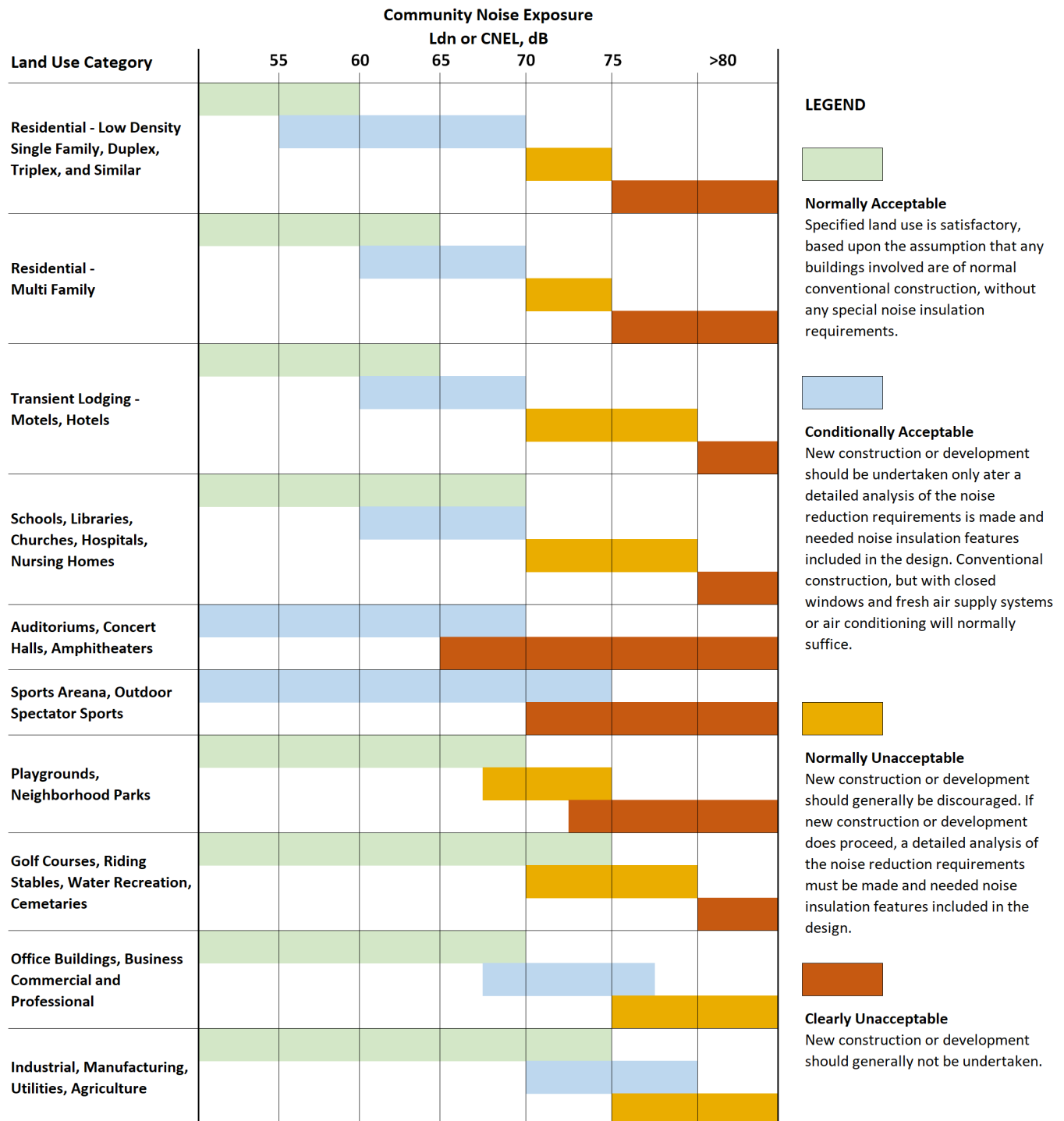
Future Noise Contours



- Town of Los Gatos
- Planning Area/
Sphere of Influence

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

Figure 8-6 Land Use Noise Compatibility Criteria



Source: California General Plan Guidelines, 2017

ENV-18.3 Exterior Noise Levels

Require all exterior noise levels to be based on the compatibility criteria shown on Figure 8-6.

ENV-18.4 Residential and Noise-Sensitive Site Design Noise Consideration

Protect existing and proposed residential areas from noise by requiring appropriate site and building design, sound walls, a minimum landscape buffer of five feet, and/or the use of noise attenuating construction techniques and materials.

ENV-18.5 Noise Restrictions in Commercial and Industrial Developments

For commercial and industrial developments adjacent to residential neighborhoods, additional restrictions beyond the Noise Ordinance by up to 10 percent shall be applied in designated areas to reduce noise intrusions in residential districts.

ENV-18.6 Transportation Improvement Noise Consideration

Ensure that transportation improvement plans address noise-sensitive areas and do not expose them to unacceptable noise levels.

ENV-18.7 Noise Limit Enforcement

Enforce noise limits and monitor compliance with noise standards.

ENV-19

Ensure proposed new development is not located in areas with existing higher-than-acceptable noise levels.

ENV-19.1 Noise-sensitive Developments

Require all new noise-sensitive developments, and sound- or noise-generating uses near open space, to provide a noise study prepared by a licensed acoustician with recommendations for reducing noise impacts to the maximum allowed level in the Noise Ordinance.

ENV-19.2 Locating Development

Locate new development in areas where noise levels are appropriate for the proposed use. Use Town standards, including Figure 8-6 as a part of development review.

ENV-20

Ensure that roadway-related noise does not adversely affect people in Los Gatos.

ENV-20.1 Road Construction Noise

Ensure that the construction of roadways or roadway improvements consider noise level standards for scheduling and construction methods to the maximum extent feasible.

ENV-20.2 Transportation Agency Cooperation

Cooperate with transportation agencies, including Caltrans and VTA, to reduce noise from existing and future roadways and consider noise reduction strategies related to the design and location of all facilities.

ENV-20.3 Noise Control Measures

Require that stringent noise control measures accompany construction of new County, State, and Federal roads and highways by constructing aesthetically pleasing sound walls, berms, and dense landscaping where appropriate.

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

ENV-21

Ensure that construction and maintenance equipment noise does not adversely affect land uses.

ENV-21.1 Noise Attenuation, Town Equipment

All Town-owned and operated construction and maintenance equipment, and equipment for these activities operated under contract with the Town, shall contain state-of-the-art noise attenuation equipment.

ENV-21.2 Noise Attenuation, Private Equipment

Monitor and modify Town ordinances, as appropriate, to control nuisance noise from maintenance equipment used in the community.

ENV-21.3 Noise Reduction Legislation

Continue to support State legislation reducing noise levels for machinery, motor vehicles, and other equipment that generates excessive noise.

8.12 Implementation Programs

Programs		Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible Supporting Department(s)	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
A	State Scenic Highway Study the feasibility of applying to designate SR 17 between Lark Avenue and SR 9 as a State Scenic Highway.	ENV-1.1 ENV-1.4	Parks and Public Works		■		
B	Tree Ordinance Review the Tree Ordinance periodically and update as necessary to ensure regulations meet leading standards for tree health practices. SUS	ENV-2.1	Parks and Public Works Community Development				■
C	Williamson Act Work to maintain Williamson Act agricultural preserve contracts in the Town and SOI.	ENV-3.1 ENV-3.3	Community Development				■
D	Re-Designation of Properties Not in Williamson Act Designate all Williamson Act properties Agriculture and remove the Agriculture designation for those properties that are no longer under the Williamson Act.	ENV-3.1 ENV-3.3	Community Development				■
E	Ecosystem Protection Promote and support ecosystem protection and environmental education programs for residents and developers. SUS	ENV-4.1 ENV-4.2	Parks and Public Works				■

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
F Landscape Maintenance Education Develop and provide education programs for Town staff, residents, and developers regarding landscape maintenance, soil health and retention, and irrigation practices that protect the urban forest and wildlife species, along with water supplies.	ENV-4.1 ENV-4.3 ENV-15.3	Parks and Public Works Community Development				■
G Grading Ordinance Amend the grading ordinance to establish standards to maintain and conserve existing native plant species. SUS	ENV-5.1 ENV-5.2 ENV-5.3 ENV-5.4	Parks and Public Works Community Development		■		
H Native and Special Species Catalog Publish a list of native, special status, and native special status plant species in Los Gatos and the SOI on the Town website and update the list in the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines. SUS	ENV-5.1 ENV-5.2 ENV-5.3	Parks and Public Works Community Development		■		
I Invasive Species Catalog Publish a list of invasive plant species on the Town website. Disseminate information about their use and eradication. SUS	ENV-5.1 ENV-5.4	Parks and Public Works		■		
J Riparian Policy Adopt a riparian policy to protect riparian corridors. SUS	ENV-6.1 ENV-6.2 ENV-6.3 ENV-6.4	Parks and Public Works Community Development		■		
K Riparian Corridor Lighting Require careful lighting design in and near natural riparian corridors to direct light away and to maximize the distance between nighttime lighting and the corridor. SUS	ENV-6.2	Parks and Public Works Community Development		■		
L Recreational Trails Limit development of recreational trails in riparian corridors.	ENV-6.3	Parks and Public Works				■
M Movement Corridor Plan Support the ongoing identification of critical linkages between movement corridors for wildlife, particularly in hillside communities, but throughout the Town. Develop standards and ordinances designed to conserve these movement corridors. SUS	ENV-7.3	Parks and Public Works Community Development		■		

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
N Bird Safety Ordinance Adopt a Bird Safety Ordinance to reduce bird collisions with windows that provide development standards and performance measures that regulate building design and lighting implementation. SUS	ENV-7.10	Community Development	■			
O Dark Skies Ordinance Adopt a Dark Skies Ordinance that addresses light pollution, building lighting design, and impacts to wildlife. SUS	ENV-7.11	Community Development	■			
P Air Quality Standards Adopt standards that target reduction of very fine particulate matter (PM _{2.5}) through a combination of incentive programs and control measures, as well as establishing standards for other criteria pollutants. SUS	ENV-8.1 ENV-8.5	Community Development	■			
Q Development Near Heavily Traveled Roads Implement BAAQMD standards for designing buildings that will be situated near heavily travelled roads to minimize exposure to vehicle emissions. SUS	ENV-8.1 ENV-8.7	Community Development	■			
R Concrete and Asphalt Use Explore and implement feasible and cost-effective ways to reduce concrete and asphalt use in parks and public projects. SUS	ENV-8.2	Parks and Public Works		■		
S Particulate Matter Promote understanding of health impacts from particulate emissions and offer information to residents and businesses about steps for reducing particulate matter, such as reducing or eliminating wood-burning stoves and fireplaces or transitioning to “green” dry cleaning facilities. SUS	ENV-8.2 ENV-8.6	Community Development	■			
T Alternatives to Individual Auto Use Develop a comprehensive TDM program to encourage ride sharing, biking, walking, and other alternatives to individual auto use. SUS	ENV-8.3	Parks and Public Works	■			
U EV Charging Stations Update the Zoning Ordinance to establish a ratio for electric vehicle charging stations as a ratio of total required parking for new projects or substantial renovations. SUS	ENV-8.4	Community Development	■			

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
V Electric Vehicle Parking Incentives Provide incentives, such as giving priority in plan review, processing, and field inspection services, for new and existing commercial and residential projects that provide parking spaces reserved for electric vehicles and have a charging connection. SUS	ENV-8.4 ENV-8.5	Community Development	■			
W Sustainability Information Center Establish and maintain a “sustainability information center” at Town Hall to inform the public and distribute brochures and provide information. SUS	ENV-9 ENV-9.4 ENV-10.2	Community Development	■			
X Sustainability Plan Update Update the Sustainability Plan to reflect recent updates in Federal and State law, address zero-waste and recycling, as well as revise GHG targets for the Town. Following the update to the Sustainability Plan, revise all planning documents to reflect the changes to targets and actions and to align processes. SUS	ENV-9.1 ENV-9.2 ENV-9.3 ENV-9.4 ENV-9.5 ENV-9.15	Community Development		■		
Y Design Review Standards for GHG Emissions Develop applicable Planning and Building design standards to evaluate a project’s contribution to GHG emissions and bring all planning materials into line with these standards. SUS	ENV-9.1 ENV-9.3 ENV-9.4 ENV-9.11	Community Development	■			
Z Continually Assess Local Climate Change Vulnerabilities Every five years, Town staff shall reassess progress toward GHG reduction goals and update the Sustainability Plan to ensure continued progress in reducing GHG emissions from operation of Town facilities and services and from the community. SUS	ENV-9.1 ENV-9.2 ENV-9.3	Community Development				■
AA Green Building Initiatives Develop an incentive program to encourage individuals and businesses to complete green retrofits on properties through incentives such as tax credits and financing opportunities. SUS	ENV-9.1 ENV-9.3 ENV-9.4 ENV-11.1 ENV-11.2	Town Manager	■			

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
BB Heat Island Mitigation Guidelines Prepare specific heat island mitigation building guidelines in line with the Sustainability Plan and the Green Building Ordinance (Ordinance 2257). Amend applicable building and remodel Commercial Design Guidelines to integrate these specific guidelines. SUS	ENV-9.1 ENV-9.3 ENV-9.5 ENV-9.6	Community Development	■			
CC Plant Based Education Develop and implement a plan to educate and support residents about the environmental, economic, and social benefits of shifting to a plant-based diet, examples of which may include informational materials, educational programs, community events, coordination with schools and businesses, or guidelines for procurement. SUS	ENV-9.3 ENV-9.4	Library Town Manager	■			
DD Climate Change Education Work with local organizations to support educational programs that raise awareness about climate change and resiliency actions, including ways residents and business owners can contribute to GHG reduction, including increased recycling opportunities (hazardous household waste, e-waste, and large household items). SUS	ENV-9.11	Town Manager Parks and Public Works	■			
EE Energy Conservation and Reduction Develop and implement programs that promote energy reduction/efficiency upgrades, zero waste practices, and use of renewable energy and building materials. SUS	ENV-9.7	Community Development Town Manager	■			
FF Regional Cooperation Collaborate with large regional employers to increase availability of ride share and other programs from Los Gatos to corporate campuses and central areas in Silicon Valley cities where the employers are located.	ENV-9.7 ENV-9.8 ENV-9.9	Town Manager				■
GG Upgrade Town's Vehicle Fleet Identify opportunities to increase and/or change the Town's vehicle fleet to maximize the use of alternative fuels. SUS	ENV-9.10	Parks and Public Works	■			

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
HH Green Building Technical Assistance Provide technical assistance, directly or through referral services as appropriate, to developers and homeowners wishing to incorporate green building techniques. SUS	ENV-9.9	Community Development	■			
II Incentivize Alternative Fuel Availability Develop an incentive program to increase the number of alternative fuel stations. SUS	ENV-9.11	Community Development Town Manager		■		
JJ Zero Waste in Town Facilities Implement zero waste program in municipal facilities that models the actions for businesses and residents. SUS	ENV-10.1 ENV-10.2	Parks and Public Works Town Manger		■		
KK Solid Waste Reduction Adopt programs that reduce the number of materials entering the solid waste stream to achieve Statewide waste reduction targets. SUS	ENV-10.1 ENV-10.2 ENV-10.3 ENV-10.4 ENV-10.5 ENV-10.7	Parks and Public Works	■			
LL Recycling Access Revise recycling facility requirement to include a variety of waste-reduction facilities, including food and garden composting and hazardous waste. SUS	ENV-10.7	Parks and Public Works	■			
MM Zero Waste Education Provide ongoing education about the environmental benefits of reducing wasteful consumption and avoiding products with excessive packaging, recycling, refilling empty containers, separating food and yard waste for composting, and using rechargeable batteries, among other topics. SUS	ENV-10.1 ENV-10.2 ENV-10.3 ENV-10.4 ENV-10.5 ENV-10.7	Parks and Public Works Town Manger				■
NN Energy Reduction Education Work with other sustainability education programs to develop and disseminate information about energy demand reduction opportunities. SUS	ENV-11.2	Parks and Public Works		■		
OO Solar Implementation in Los Gatos Incentivize installation of roof-top solar and onsite energy storage on all new construction, including parking facilities, using the latest in green building technology. SUS	ENV-11.4	Community Development	■			

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
PP Minimize Impacts to Archaeological and Cultural Resources Develop guidelines for project review to ensure that potential impacts to archaeological and/or cultural resources are minimized.	ENV-12.1 ENV-12.2 ENV-12.3 ENV-12.4 ENV-12.5 ENV-12.6	Community Development		■		
QQ Identify Cultural Resources Identify Native American/cultural resources and heritage trees with interpretive signs as appropriate.	ENV-12.5	Community Development		■		
RR Adaptive Reuse Develop a policy to address adaptive reuse of historic buildings including mixed-use, arts spaces, and other innovative uses that help preserve the historic nature while making the buildings usable spaces.	ENV-13.6	Community Development Parks and Public Works	■			
SS History Archives Seek funding to support preservation and curation of the local history archive at the Los Gatos Public Library.	ENV-13.7	Library	■			
TT Indigenous People Language Review and update language used in the Environment and Sustainability Element in regards to Indigenous People to be consistent with the Town's work on a land acknowledgement.	ENV-13.8	Community Development Town Manager	■			
UU Hillside Landscape Design Guidelines Update Update the hillside landscape design guidelines to include requirements to optimize soil volume, porosity, structure, and health. Add information on location, shape, and configuration of soil beds, particularly relative to bioswale components in commercial and residential design.	ENV-15.3	Parks and Public Works Community Development		■		
VV Street-sweeping Increase street-sweeping schedule from once per month in streets and twice per month in parking lots to twice monthly in streets and weekly in parking lots.	ENV-16.10	Parks and Public Works		■		
WW Water Reuse Develop an ordinance and guidelines to provide for the installation of grey water reuse in residential and business uses, particularly for landscape irrigation.	ENV-17.4	Community Development	■			
XX Rainwater Implement rainwater harvesting in municipal facilities throughout the Town. Encourage residents and businesses to use rain barrels or other rainwater reuse systems. Offer incentives where possible.	ENV-17.5	Parks and Public Works		■		

SUS

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
YY Sustainable Water Practices Educate residents and businesses about low-water landscaping, limited pesticide application, and other water-sustaining practices. Implement these in municipal practices. SUS	ENV-17.8	Parks and Public Works Community Development				■
ZZ Water Audit Programs In collaboration with efforts by local water purveyors, promote water audit programs that offer free water audits to single-family, multi-family, large landscape accounts, and commercial customers. Collaborate with purveyors to enact conservation programs for commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) accounts and create programs to install ultra-low-flush toilets in facilities. SUS	ENV-17.8	Parks and Public Works Community Development				■
AAA Adopt Noise Impact Review Procedure Adopt a procedure for reviewing the noise impacts of any proposed development and update the Town's Noise Ordinance to reflect these standards.	ENV-18.1 ENV-18.2 ENV-19.1 ENV-19.2	Community Development Code Compliance		■		
BBB Establish Noise Significance Criteria Establish significance criteria for evaluating increases in ambient noise resulting from new development and evaluating the compatibility of new development with the existing noise environment.	ENV-18.1 ENV-18.2 ENV-19.1 ENV-19.2	Community Development Parks and Public Works		■		
CCC Require Noise Buffers Amend the Town Code to require buffers or separation between noise-generating uses and noise-sensitive uses.	ENV-18.4	Community Development Parks and Public Works	■			
DDD Noise Control Measures Update Regularly review data from both the public and private sector to update noise control procedures and programs.	ENV-18.4 ENV-18.5 ENV-18.6 ENV-18.7	Community Development Parks and Public Works		■		
EEE Identify Noise-reducing Traffic Improvements Conduct a study to identify roadway improvements to reduce high noise levels created by traffic congestion without increasing speed or traffic levels.	ENV-20.1 ENV-20.2 ENV-20.3	Parks and Public Works		■		
FFF Review Noise-reducing Effectiveness Periodically review traffic volumes and average speeds to ensure maximum effectiveness in reducing noise levels, especially adjacent to residential areas.	ENV-20.1 ENV-20.2 ENV-20.3	Parks and Public Works		■		

8. Environment and Sustainability Element

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
GGG Study Gardening Equipment Ban Study a ban that requires gardening equipment to be mitigated when it creates adverse noise.	ENV-21.1 ENV-21.2	Community Development	■			

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