



## NEWSLETTER #2: BACKGROUND REPORT

### What is a Background Report?

The Background Report provides a “snapshot” of current (2018) conditions and trends in Los Gatos. It provides a detailed description of a wide range of topics important to the community, such as demographics, economic development, land uses, public facilities, and environmental resources. The Background Report provides decision-makers, the public, and local agencies with context for developing the General Plan. The Background Report will also serve as the “Environmental Setting” section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that will be prepared for the General Plan.

The Background Report is divided into nine chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Los Gatos Today
3. Land Use
4. Mobility
5. Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure
6. Open Space, Parks, and Recreation
7. Environment and Sustainability
8. Hazards and Safety
9. Housing

The following pages in the newsletter will briefly describe what is covered in each of the Background Report chapters as well as interesting facts and major findings from the Report. The complete Background Report can be downloaded from the General Plan update website at [losgatos2040.com](http://losgatos2040.com).

### What Area Does the General Plan Cover?

A General Plan, pursuant to State law, must address all areas within the jurisdiction’s planning area. The planning area encompasses all incorporated and unincorporated territory that bears a relationship to the long-term physical planning of the Town. For the Los Gatos General Plan, the Town’s Planning Area includes all land within the Town Limits, unincorporated areas within the Town boundary, and hillside residential and open space areas south of the Town limits.

### WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS?

1. Project Initiation
2. Prepare Background Report
3. Identify Community Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints and Confirm Vision (Current Phase)
4. Development of Land Use Alternatives
5. General Plan Goals and Policy Development
6. Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
7. Certification of EIR and Adoption of the General Plan

**We are currently starting the 3rd phase.**





## Los Gatos Today

The Los Gatos Today chapter describes the current demographic, fiscal, and economic development conditions in Los Gatos. The fiscal health of the community is essential to providing a high level of public services and community amenities, while contributing significantly to the quality of life for Los Gatos residents. Economic conditions in the private sector gauge existing trends and opportunities and point towards shifts and transitions in the local economy. All of this affects the prosperity of Los Gatos residents and the tax base that supports the delivery of municipal services.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- Between 2017 and 2027, Los Gatos is projected to have an estimated increase of 4,350 jobs, which will primarily be in the fields of information and health care/social assistance.
- The retail category with the largest net capture of regional sales is food stores. Store categories with retail leakage (residents shopping in other jurisdictions) include building materials, clothing, vehicle dealers, general merchandise stores, gasoline stations, and eating places.
- Over 62 percent of Los Gatos residents have a household income of at least at least \$100,000 annually.
- The primary housing type in Los Gatos is single-family housing which accounts for approximately 71 percent of the total housing stock. Single-family homes comprise a greater proportion of housing in Los Gatos compared to Santa Clara County as a whole, where 64 percent of housing is single-family homes.
- The largest single revenue source for the Town is property tax, which comprises 38 percent of the Town's operating revenue.
- The Town consistently adopts a balanced budget and maintains a minimum of 25 percent in reserves to cover fluctuations in economically sensitive revenues or unexpected expenses due to natural or other disasters.



## Land Use

The Land Use chapter provides a comprehensive review of land use patterns in Los Gatos and the plans, policies, and ordinances used to regulate land uses in the Town. It identifies potential challenges and opportunities related to the long-term growth and development of the Town and analyzes development capacity. The chapter also summarizes regional plans and those of adjacent communities and analyzes how these plans and policies influence land uses within Los Gatos.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- Los Gatos encompasses 7,335 acres or 11.5 square miles.
- The overall pattern of development in Town is large single-family residential neighborhoods.
- Residential is the most common land use type by acreage, accounting for approximately 40 percent (4,738 acres), followed by parks and open space at approximately 36 percent (4,221 acres) of the total land in Town.
- Los Gatos has 374 acres of vacant land within Town limits remaining to accommodate new development; most of it is zoned as Hillside Residential and must comply with the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines of the Town.
- Post-war growth across the country shaped many residential neighborhoods in Los Gatos in the 1950s and 1960s.
- Notable architectural styles in Los Gatos date back to the 1850s.
- Los Gatos is home to five historic districts concentrated around Downtown Los Gatos. The historic districts are home to many historically designated buildings and structures.



## Mobility

The Mobility chapter provides a comprehensive assessment of existing transportation conditions within the Town of Los Gatos and in the larger regional context of the San Francisco Bay Area. The assessment of existing conditions will help the Town develop a General Plan strategy to encourage an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that meets the needs of Los Gatos, while still retaining the Town's unique character. Additional information covered under the Mobility chapter includes several aspects of transportation including: roadways and functional classifications; the transportation system; pedestrian facilities; bicycle facilities; transit services and facilities; goods movement; Transportation Demand Management (TDM); and parking.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- The predominate method of commuting to work for residents (80 percent) and employees (78 percent) of Los Gatos is driving alone.
- Less than two percent of Los Gatos residents and employees use public transit, which is less than the County average of five percent.
- There are some notable gaps in lighting, sidewalks, and crossing infrastructure throughout Los Gatos, such as on Winchester Boulevard from north of Daves Avenue to Lark Avenue.
- Downtown and the Los Gatos Creek Trail have the highest volume of pedestrian activity.
- The existing bicycle network in Los Gatos is composed of approximately 13 miles of bikeways.
- In 2016, Los Gatos partnered with the Los Gatos Union School District, the Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District, and Hillbrook School to conduct a study of traffic around local schools to evaluate all modes of transportation and potential pedestrian upgrades.
- There are multiple Town parking lots that provide free time limited parking until 3 a.m. (no parking from 3 a.m. to 5 a.m.) that are within one or two blocks of Downtown. There are no time limits on Saturdays and in certain Town lots.

# Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure

The Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure chapter contains an assessment of current utilities, facilities, programs, and infrastructure that service the Town of Los Gatos.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Current water supplies are projected to meet the needs of Los Gatos through the year 2040.
- The Rinconada Water Treatment Plant is currently under renovation to modernize the system and will result in an increase in capacity to 100 million gallons of water per day, improved water quality, and greater seismic stability.
- All storm drains in the Town of Los Gatos discharge into one of nine creeks that ultimately drain into the San Francisco Bay.
- Four electricity substations serve Los Gatos, two of which are located within Town.
- The Los Gatos Police Department has 58 sworn and civilian personnel and over 50 community volunteers and provides contract service to the adjacent city of Monte Sereno.
- The Santa Clara County Fire Department provides fire protection services to Los Gatos.
- The Town of Los Gatos is served by four elementary school districts and two high school districts, two of which are outside the Town boundaries.
- The Los Gatos Public Library collection includes 155,000 physical items and 923,000 digital items, as well as an extensive collection of historical artifacts and information, with emphasis on the Town of Los Gatos and surrounding areas.

# Open Space, Parks, and Recreation

The Open Space, Parks, and Recreation chapter identifies open space classifications and existing open space, parks, recreation facilities, and access conditions in Los Gatos. These resources are described in three sections: Open Space Classifications; Open Space and Preservation; and Parks and Recreational Facilities.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- The Town contains four open space preserves totaling 3,020 acres, two of which are operated by the Town's Parks and Public Works Department and two of which are operated by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.
- Los Gatos has a total of 37 public and private parks and recreational facilities, over 254 acres of parkland, and seven miles of multi-use trails.
- Out of the 18 publicly owned parks, one is owned and operated by the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department and the remaining 17 are operated by the Town of Los Gatos Parks and Public Works Department.

# Environment and Sustainability

The Environment and Sustainability chapter describes the existing conditions related to environmental resources and sustainability in the Los Gatos, including aesthetics, cultural and historic resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and hydrology. Additional information regulating to greenhouse gas emissions is located in Chapter 4: Mobility, and additional information on Town designated Historic Districts is located in Chapter 3: Land Use.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- SR 9 is an officially designated State Scenic Highway outside the Town limits and runs in a northeast direction from Los Gatos Boulevard and extending out of Town.
- Approximately 117 acres in the Planning Area are private lands preserved for open space and agriculture.
- The California Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) identified five special status species in or within three miles of the Town.
- Total greenhouse gas emissions in Los Gatos were approximately 381,640 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2008. The primary sources of GHG emissions in the Town are transportation (65 percent) and residential building energy (18 percent). Commercial, office, and industrial building energy use comprised approximately 12 percent of local emissions, while solid waste, water, wastewater, and other emissions comprised approximately five percent total.
- Eight cultural resources within the Town of Los Gatos are either listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or the California Register of Historical Resources.
- Several major fault zones and minor faults run through the Town of Los Gatos and adjacent areas.

# Hazards and Safety

The Hazards and Safety chapter describes environmental and material hazards in the Town of Los Gatos, including emergency preparedness and response. It summarizes applicable federal, State, and local regulations that manage hazards and hazardous materials. The discussion focuses on hazards most relevant to Los Gatos, including earthquake, flood, fire, noise, hazardous materials, and aviation hazards.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Several areas within Town are subject to soil instability (liquefaction), and large areas in the southern and eastern sections of the Town are subject to landslides due to hilly terrain and steep slopes.
- Several areas of Town are at risk of 100-year and 500-year floods.
- Despite the high wildfire danger in a portion of the Town, the last reported wildfire within Los Gatos was the Cats Fire in 1997, which burned 15 acres and 6 homes.
- Roadway traffic is the most significant source of noise affecting residents in Los Gatos.
- Four hazardous material sites exist in Los Gatos and are regulated by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Two of these sites, Maxxim Medical and Swanson Ford Dealership, have been remediated and redeveloped with other uses.



## Housing

State Housing Element Law (Government Code Section 65580, et seq.) mandates that local governments adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The California Department of Housing and Community Development and the Association of Bay Area Governments identify the projected Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for each jurisdiction in the Bay Area in cycles of eight-year projection periods (currently 2015-2023). Once the RHNA has been identified, local governments must adopt a revised Housing Element that plans to accommodate their portion of the region's projected housing need.

The Town's current Housing Element was adopted on May 5, 2015 and addresses housing needs for the 2015-2023 projection period. The Housing chapter, extracted from that 2015-2023 Housing Element, provides existing conditions information on household characteristics, housing stock, housing affordability, and households with special needs. Where available, current (2018) data has been added to supplement the information provided by the adopted Housing Element.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- According to the California Department of Finance, Los Gatos had 13,299 total housing units in 2018.
- The American Community Survey reported the median gross rent of all rental units in the Town increased from \$1,752 in 2011 to \$2,111 in 2017. An online survey of available multi-family apartments in October 2018 showed a median asking rental price of approximately \$2,900.
- In 2017, the number of homeowners overpaying for housing was 2,573, while the number of households overpaying for rent was 1,752, totaling approximately 36 percent of households in Los Gatos.
- According to the 2017 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey, 53 homeless persons live in Los Gatos, which represents less than 0.2 percent of the total population in Los Gatos.

# How can you make a difference?

## Get Involved!

For the General Plan to truly represent the community's vision for the future, we need your help. The success of this planning effort will depend on the input of the community, and we have provided a range of ways to hear your ideas for the future of Los Gatos. You have the choice to attend a community workshop or provide input online from the comfort of your home.

## Visit the Project Website

The General Plan website ([losgatos2040.com](http://losgatos2040.com)) is frequently updated with information on the status of the General Plan update, announcements of upcoming workshops and meetings, and publication of reports.

## Sign Up for E-mail Updates

On the project website ([losgatos2040.com](http://losgatos2040.com)), you can sign up for email notifications. By signing up, you will be notified when new documents have been released and when meetings or workshops will be held.

## Attend Meetings, Workshops, and Pop-Up Events

Not only are these great opportunities to learn about the General Plan update, meetings and workshops are also a great place for your voice to be heard and to listen to ideas from others. Pop-up events will also be held in Los Gatos to provide more opportunities for input.

Check [losgatos2040.com](http://losgatos2040.com) for upcoming dates and locations.

## Engagement HQ

From the [losgatos2040.com](http://losgatos2040.com) website, click on the "ENGAGEMENT HQ" button on the Home page to open a range of tools designed to get your input and feedback on the future of Los Gatos. During the update, you can contribute to the conversation anytime, from any connected device to:

- Share your ideas;
- Support or expand on ideas you like;
- Respond to an instant poll or survey; and
- Submit links, maps, photos, and videos that help explain your ideas for how to make Los Gatos an even better place to live, work, and play.

***During the General Plan update, the Engagement HQ page will change frequently, so check back often.***

## VISIT THE UPDATE WEBSITE TO:

- Stay informed
- Find out about upcoming meetings
- Sign up for email updates
- Share your ideas on the Town's future



[losgatos2040.com](http://losgatos2040.com)