

Connect Los Gatos Community Engagement Plan

Final

Adopted by Town Council March 3, 2020

Background

Since the adoption of the Town’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in March 2017, the Town of Los Gatos has made great progress in implementing the priorities identified by the Council and the community. After completing a few important bicycle and pedestrian improvements, the Town is embarking on a program of projects that will make a bigger impact on active transportation choices for all travelers.

Connect Los Gatos is a community engagement initiative that promotes a program of bicycle and pedestrian projects that will connect and improve the multimodal network throughout the Town. The current program of projects includes:



- Los Gatos Creek Trail Connector to Highway 9
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing over Highway 17
- Winchester Complete Streets
- Shannon Road Multi-Use Path
- Kennedy Road Sidewalk
- Highway 9/Massol Avenue Rectangular Rapidly Flashing Beacon

The bicycle and pedestrian projects included in this program are identified in the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*. They are aimed to improve the Town’s multimodal network by closing connectivity gaps and providing safe crossings. The network will expand and provide safe access to key community destinations. Connect Los Gatos is aimed at making it easier and safer for all to bike and walk in Los Gatos. As significant projects from the Town’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (or other Council identified multi-modal projects) are advanced, these will be added to the Connect Los Gatos community engagement program.

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the Community Engagement Plan is to establish a framework for the active engagement by the community. It describes and outlines the major tools and activities that will be used to keep the community informed and solicit input in the project development process, from planning, funding, environmental clearance, design to construction. This plan identifies key community engagement goals, outreach methods and events, and is intended to be updated regularly to reflect any appropriate process changes. The plan provides a “toolbox” of options for outreach to the community. Outreach “tools” will be tailored to the specific project and projects may not use all of the tools outlined in the plan.

The Town of Los Gatos is committed to creating bike and pedestrian connectivity projects (“Connect Los Gatos”) that aligns with local needs and mobility priorities. Broad community input will be integral to each phase of the process. Key community engagement goals include:

1. Increasing community awareness of the mobility, safety and design challenges and opportunities for each project;
2. Providing access to project information and opportunities for meaningful participation;
3. Offering a range of communication and engagement tools to match interest and preferences;
4. Ensuring the projects reflect community priorities; and
5. Obtaining community support for project design and funding

Outreach Approach and Tools

Connect Los Gatos includes a comprehensive approach to engaging a broad segment of the public with proposed project awareness, input, feedback, and opportunities for engaged participation. No single tool works for all situations and outreach for each project listed may be different.

The Town is committed to deploying tools that will be most effective in encouraging participation and feedback from community members that represent diverse backgrounds. By offering a range of communication and engagement tools, the Town aims to match interest and preferences of community members.

Special attention will be paid to reaching out to special populations that are traditionally more difficult to reach. The inclusive efforts include distributing flyers included in outreach materials of community partners and conducting targeted outreach to seniors and the youth.

TOOLS	DESCRIPTION	EVENTS
<u>Stakeholders Engagement</u>	Identifying the key stakeholders, including Town Council, community partners, and commissioners, that have a greater understanding of local active transportation issues in the community. Engagement with key stakeholders for project awareness, initial feedback, input from community workshops, alternatives and concept design.	Infrastructure Bike Ride Public meetings: Complete Streets & Transportation Commission Town Council Parks Commission Monte Sereno Better Streets Commission Safe Routes to Schools
<u>Community Meetings and Workshops</u>	Meetings and workshops to engage a broad segment of the public with proposed project awareness, input, feedback, and opportunities for engaged participation.	Project specific public meetings and workshops

<u>Pop-Up Events</u>	Pop-ups are an informal approach used to increase community participation and awareness by setting up booths or posters at community wide events. Informal outreach provides an opportunity to engage a diverse set of community members otherwise missed by traditional meetings.	Back-to-School events Los Gatos Holiday Parade Farmer’s market Spring Into Green event
<u>Online Engagement and Social Media</u>	Online and social media engagement will deliver project information to the community at large. The project webpage will be an overview of the bicycle and pedestrian program and will include individual project webpages. Webpages will include community meetings, photos, graphics, maps, and reports in PDF format.	Project Webpage: www.losgatosca.gov/connectLG Links to individual project webpages FaceBook Town website front page NextDoor Town Instagram Email blasts
<u>Targeted Outreach</u>	Focused outreach in areas where under-represented residents will be reached. Provide contact information in multiple languages, special outreach efforts to seniors, disabled people, low-income households, and the youth.	Youth Commission Community & Senior Services Commission Emails and e-newsletter to schools and Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Contact information in Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese Information included in LGS Recreation and other community partner information materials
<u>Data Collection and Interaction</u>	Data collection provides baseline data and an assessment of existing conditions of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure for each project. Digital tools such as crowdsourcing through interactive maps allows users to provide specific place-based information. They are also effective in soliciting feedback on specific locations for each project.	Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts User interviews and surveys Crowdsourcing: interactive web map

Implementation and Updates

Branded Presentation Design

Connect Los Gatos deploys a branded design to provide a consistent presentation for the outreach messages for the program and all projects. This strategy leverages the branding to grow familiarity and support for the entire program. The Connect Los Gatos logo reinforces the overall program initiative that each project will connect and build upon the existing network to fill connectivity gaps – each project on its own is part of a grander vision.

Community Engagement Events

The Plan's community engagement activities can be implemented at both the program level and the project level and will vary based on the project needs. Some of the program and project level outreach points that may be used include:

1. **Existing Conditions/Needs Assessment:** Informs the community for project awareness. This phase focuses on the existing conditions both on opportunities, constraints and needs assessment while soliciting initial input and feedback for community vision.
2. **Design Alternatives:** Focuses on the development of the conceptual design alternatives based on initial input and feedback from phase 1. Conducts extensive engagement to solicit feedback on the design alternatives.
3. **Preferred Alternative and/or Final Design:** Presents the designs to a wide range of stakeholders, solicits feedback to support decision making. This is also the phase to further identify funding opportunities and/or support future funding decisions.
4. **Construction Phase:** Informs the community of the construction impacts. The messages will specially target the residents who may be mostly impacted.
5. **Evaluation:** Evaluates the project effectiveness and community acceptance through surveys and other engagement tools.

Updates

The Plan will need to be updated periodically to ensure the proper tools are being utilized to maximize public awareness and participation at the program and project specific level and to add projects as needed. Town staff will periodically update the Plan and adjust engagement activities as needed to continue to maximize authentic participation by residents and workers representing a diverse background.

