

History and Culture of Los Gatos

Location

The Town of Los Gatos, California, is nestled at the base of the Sierra Azules, approximately 50 miles south of San Francisco, in the southwestern portion of Santa Clara County where the Santa Clara Valley meets the lower slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Los Gatos is bounded by the City of San Jose to the north and east, the City of Campbell to the north, the Cities of Monte Sereno and Saratoga to the west, and the unincorporated County of Santa Clara and the County of Santa Cruz to the south.

Los Gatos encompasses a wide variety of terrain, ranging from flat topography at the edge of the valley floor to densely wooded hillsides. Both the valley and hillsides are interspersed with creeks, streams, and riparian habitat. The sharp contrast between the valley floor and the hillsides provides the Town's picturesque background.



History

The name Los Gatos comes from “El Rancho de Los Gatos,” a ranch established in 1839 by a Mexican land grant and so named because of the large number of mountain lions in the area. In 1854, James Alexander Forbes purchased some of this land and built a flour mill. In 1860, the first hotel was opened to provide a stage stop on the toll road which had been built between San Jose and Santa Cruz.

Wheat production gave way to orchards, and rapid growth ensued when the railroad reached Los Gatos in 1878. The residential subdivisions of Broadway, Bayview, Fairview, and Almond Grove were built in the 1880's. By 1887, the population had grown to 1,500 and the Los Gatos community voted to incorporate.



Fruit industries faded slowly during the Depression and World War II, but the postwar period brought an influx of people, producing residential and commercial development. Highway 17 was constructed through the center of town, opening in 1940. Growth levelled off in the early 1970's, leaving Los Gatos with its small-town atmosphere and pedestrian-oriented downtown.

Because of its distance from other centers of population, Los Gatos developed as a complete community including residential, business, and industrial elements. Preserving Los Gatos as a complete and well-balanced community has been and remains a prominent goal of residents. From the first 100-acre town site in 1890 with a population of 1,652, Los Gatos grew

slowly so that by 1963 the area was 6.3 square miles, with a population of 11,750. Today Los Gatos covers nearly 15 square miles and has a population of about 30,000. This relatively slow growth over the first 80 years resulted in a human scale community with narrow streets and small buildings.

As it exists now, Los Gatos' boundaries encompass a wide variety of terrain, ranging from level land to steep and densely wooded hillsides. The sharp visual contrasts among these features and charming architecture create the picturesque setting of the Town. In the midst of an increasingly urbanizing Silicon Valley, Los Gatos has attracted people with a preference for the Town's distinctive, high quality natural and downtown environment.



Los Gatos has a heritage of older, established residential areas and a downtown with many buildings representing the various eras in the Town's history.

Both the Town's management and the Town's residents take great care and pride in the preservation of its historic business district and residential architecture, and, as a result, Los Gatos is one of the most beautiful, well-maintained, and desirable communities in the Bay Area.



Community

Situated within the largest metropolitan area of northern California, Los Gatos is closely tied to Silicon Valley and its fast-paced economy. Located at the southern edge of Silicon Valley, Los Gatos harbors more than 3,000 businesses with a full range of services for its residents, and serves as a destination point for visitors who are attracted to its restaurants and the variety of high-end specialty shops within the pedestrian-oriented downtown setting. Downtown Los Gatos is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the model of what communities strive to achieve in a downtown.

Los Gatos has many parks and greenbelt areas, providing many recreational activities for its residents. It is also near the major cultural and professional athletic events in San Francisco and San Jose, tourist attractions in Santa Cruz, and ocean activities in the Monterey Bay. This picturesque and charming Town is full of enterprising citizens, proud of who they are and protective of where they live. There is a high level of community pride as demonstrated by many community-based organizations which work to retain Los Gatos' exceptional living environment. Unlike many of the suburban communities in the Bay Area, Los Gatos has its own identity. Los Gatos prides itself on being a "self-contained community" even though it borders a major metropolitan area. It is a close-knit and friendly community where people take time to get to know each other.



Climate

Los Gatos enjoys a mild Mediterranean climate, making it ideal for business, residential, and recreational opportunities. Summers are dry and warm in the 80 degrees to 100 degrees range. Winters are temperate

and semi-moist in the 40 degrees to 60 degrees range. Los Gatos receives most of its precipitation from December through March. It is rare to see raindrops in the summer months.

Transportation

Los Gatos is part of a comprehensive transportation network that links the town to Silicon Valley cities, the Mineta International Airport in San Jose, and mass transportation rail-line facilities. The Valley Transportation Authority also has a couple of bus lines servicing the Los Gatos community. Bus routes connect to the light rail system in various locations throughout the Silicon Valley, and the airport and train station in San Jose. The Town is also accessible via Highway 17 and Highway 85.



San Francisco and Oakland are 53 and 50 miles north of Los Gatos respectively. The coastal city of Santa Cruz is 21 miles south over the Santa Cruz Mountains, and the busy tourist towns of Monterey and Carmel are approximately 60 and 65 miles south of Los Gatos.

Economy

Historically innovation-based economies like Silicon Valley have benefited from the constant change of technological advances and globalization. The areas job base traditionally diversifies as online retail and services rose significantly resulting in increased demand for commercial office space, experiential retail, and service based businesses. Silicon Valley's unique mix of talent, technology, and capital have often translated into a genuine comparative advantage nationally. These factors propelled the region out of previous recessions and patterns of growth typically outperforming the nation. However, the unprecedented challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have forced communities all across the nation to address an economic adversary never witnessed in our lifetimes.



Like many economic barometers, nationwide home sales and valuations continued to rise prior to the pandemic, particularly in the Silicon Valley markets which trend well above the national average. Los Gatos property values reflected that strength and are among some of the highest in the state, confirming that the Town continues to be a highly desired location.

The FY 2020/21 budget reflects the economic realities of shelter-in-place restrictions and local and regional expectations for the economy. Growth in economically sensitive revenues, such as property tax, transit occupancy tax, and sales tax are projected to slow significantly from prior levels until the region emerges from shelter-in-place. Private development activity continues with client specific projects maintaining access to funding from financial lending institutions.

Vacancy rates for commercial properties in Los Gatos are low, as current and prospective retail businesses seek to enhance business models with innovative products and services to compete in the difficult brick and mortar environment. Additionally, much like the greater Silicon Valley, office and R&D vacancies remain low as new businesses continue to find opportunity in the area in the way of startups and expansions.

Town of Los Gatos Vision

Los Gatos is home. It is the type of community people want to live in because they feel a sense of belonging. When residents drive south on Highway 17, cross over Route 85, and see the beautiful Town of Los Gatos nestled at the base of the Santa Cruz Mountains they know they are home. Los Gatos is an oasis of calm within one of the major economic engines in the world, Silicon Valley. People feel safe here. The Town provides excellent schools, beautiful parks, a wonderful downtown and diverse shopping, and an accessible and responsive government.



Preserving the small-town character of Los Gatos is a collection of related issues, including; establishing acceptable levels of development, maintaining historic preservation, monitoring density and intensity and population growth, preserving downtown character, mitigating congestion, preserving open space and views of the hills, diversifying the nature of businesses located in Town, protection of the various neighborhoods, and community design. Los Gatos is a truly special place and residents expect all new development to fit into the fabric of the community and demand that new businesses enhance their high quality of life.

As Los Gatos residents expect strong leadership from their elected officials to guide the community and to ensure that the high quality of life in Los Gatos is protected for future generations, the Town utilizes three important means for ensuring the continuity of values: (a) providing mechanisms for broad public participation in government, (b) taking initiative to coordinate with other jurisdictions on regional issues that impact our Town's character and quality of life, and (c) consistent and resolute enforcement of the General Plan, specific plans, and the Town Code.

What makes Los Gatos Special?

The desire to protect the Town's high quality of life is demonstrated by extensive citizen participation in many service groups and community issues. While residents may disagree over specific issues, they share a common vision of the future of Los Gatos. Residents are adamant in their desire to maintain a high quality of life and preserve the character of the Town. The overall community consensus is that Los Gatos:

- Be a full-service community that is also environmentally sensitive
- Maintain a balanced, well-designed mix of residential, commercial, service, and open space uses, fostering a pedestrian-oriented community with a small town, village-like character
- Support an active business community that provides a wide variety of goods and services and a broad range of employment opportunities, minimizing the need to travel to other communities
- Provide a well-run, efficient municipal government that is fiscally healthy, with high levels of public safety, recreational, and arts and cultural amenities, and that is committed to high quality education



STATISTICS SECTION

Town of Los Gatos Statistics

TOWN DEMOGRAPHICS:

Current Town Area	15 Square Miles
Incorporated	August 10, 1887
Elevation	428 ft.
Miles of Streets	112
Number of Traffic Signals	31
Number of Registered Voters	19,000 – 21,000
Form of Government	Council Manager
Town Employee/Citizen Ratio	1:208

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 12 Neighborhood Parks
- Los Gatos Creek Trail
- 161 Acres of Designated Open Space
- Los Gatos-Saratoga Recreation District
 - Adult Recreation Center
 - Youth Recreation Center

- Los Gatos Library
- New Museum Los Gatos

HOSPITALS

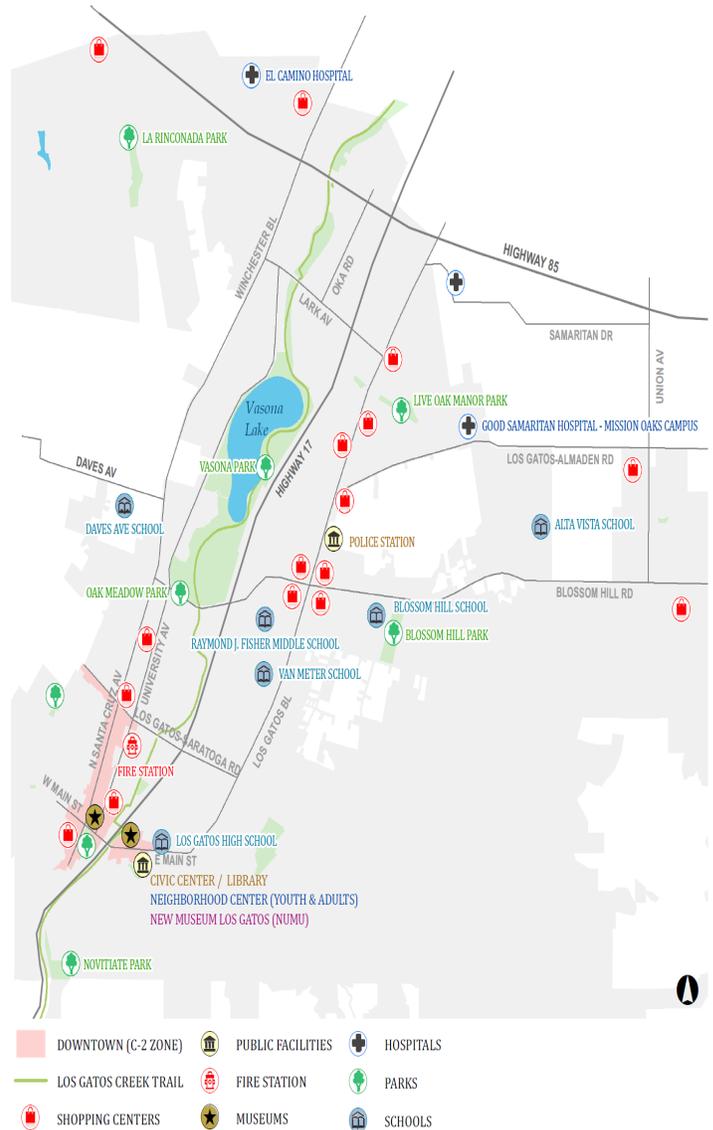
- Good Samaritan Hospital - Mission Oaks Campus
- El Camino Hospital

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- 4 Elementary Schools
- 1 Middle School
- 1 High School
- 1 Continuation Program
- 1 Independent Study

POLICE SERVICES

- 1 Police Station
- 1 Police Services Building
- 39 Police Officers
- 21 Support Personnel



Town of Los Gatos Statistics

WEATHER:

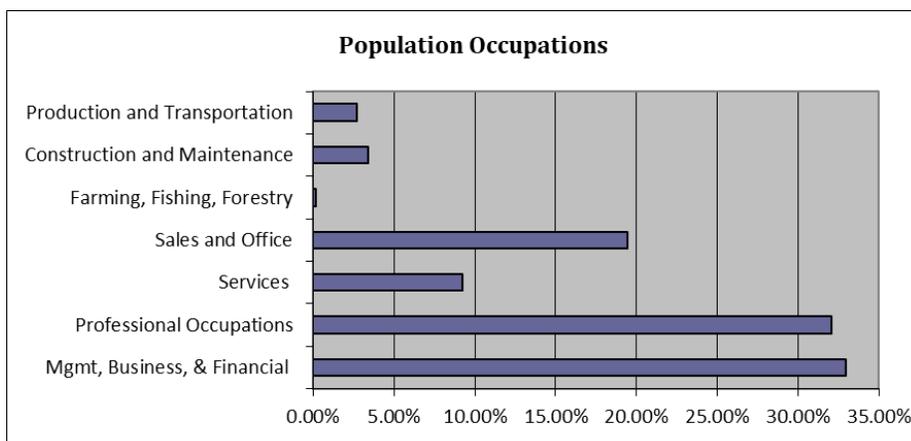
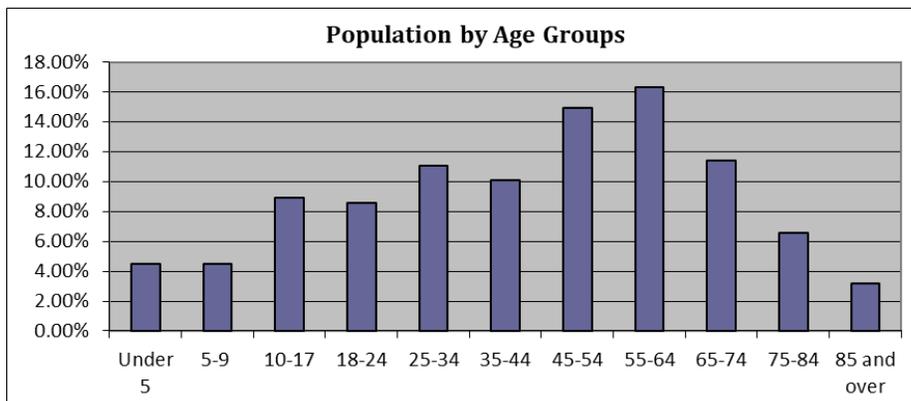
Average Temperatures (degrees Fahrenheit)

Winter	40/59
Spring	45/70
Summer	54/83
Fall	48/73

Average Sunny Days	330 per year
Average precipitation	23.08 inches
Annual snowfall	0.00 inches

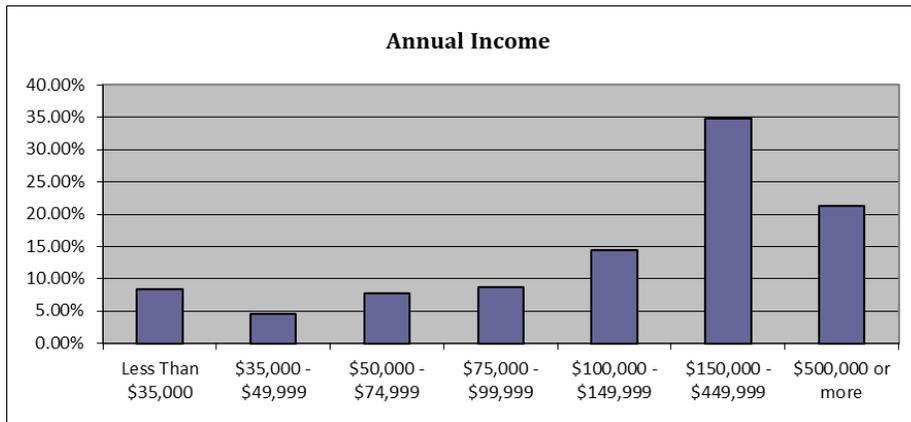
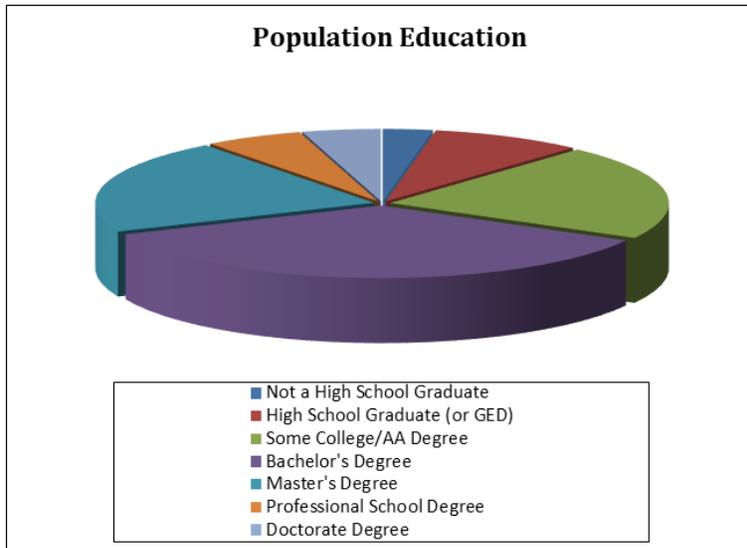
POPULATION:

1990 Census	28,013
2000 Census	28,523
2010 Census	29,413
2020 Estimates	31,439
State Ranking in Population	235 of 482

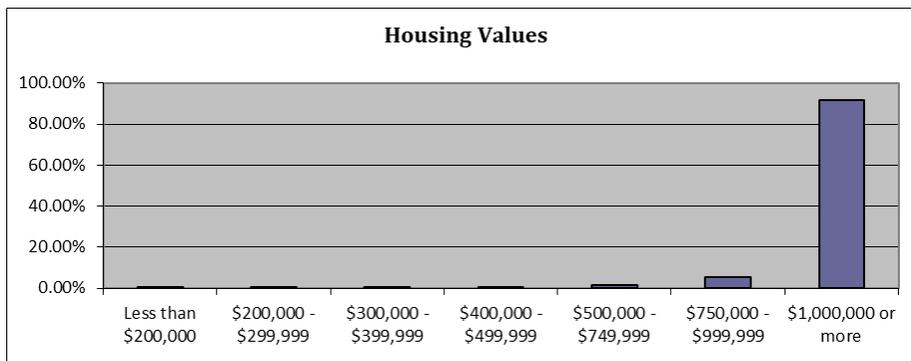


Note: Demographic figures obtained from State of California and EnviroNics Analytics

Town of Los Gatos Statistics



Housing Units	Units	Percentage
Owner Occupied	8,519	64.0%
Renter Occupied	4,811	36.0%
Total Housing Units	13,330	100%



Note: Demographic figures obtained from State of California and Envirionics Analytics

Economic Factors

FY 2019/20 Twenty Local Secured Taxpayers

Property Owner	Land Use	Assessed Value	% of Total (1)
Serramonte Corporate Center LLC	Business Park	\$ 204,861,501	1.52%
SI 32 LLC	Apartments	152,166,578	1.13%
Wealthcap Los Gatos 121	Business Park	115,777,792	0.86%
Preylock Los Gatos LLC	Business Park	89,141,472	0.66%
Donahue Schriber Realty Group LP	Shopping Center	57,497,587	0.43%
Summerhill N40 LLC	Residential Development	56,244,782	0.42%
Knowles Los Gatos LLC	Industrial	52,972,998	0.39%
San Jose Water Works	Water Company	47,777,432	0.35%
Sobrato Interests IV LLC	Apartments	44,781,377	0.33%
SRI Old Town LLC	Shopping Center	34,200,980	0.25%
KSL Capital Partners	Athletic Club	33,069,058	0.24%
International Hotel	Hotel	31,362,458	0.23%
El Camino Hospital	Medical Buildings	30,789,155 (2)	0.23%
Kay K. & Go Sasaki Sr., Trustee	Apartments	28,864,942	0.21%
750 University LLC	Office Building	26,261,632	0.19%
Safeway, Inc.	Supermarkets	25,752,231	0.19%
Equestrian 3 Investments LLC	Office Building	25,525,880	0.19%
Alberto Way Holdings LLC	Office Building	24,158,350	0.18%
Good Samaritan Hospital LP	Hospital	23,391,289	0.17%
Boccardo Corporation	Office Building	23,099,314	0.17%
		\$ 1,127,696,808	8.35%

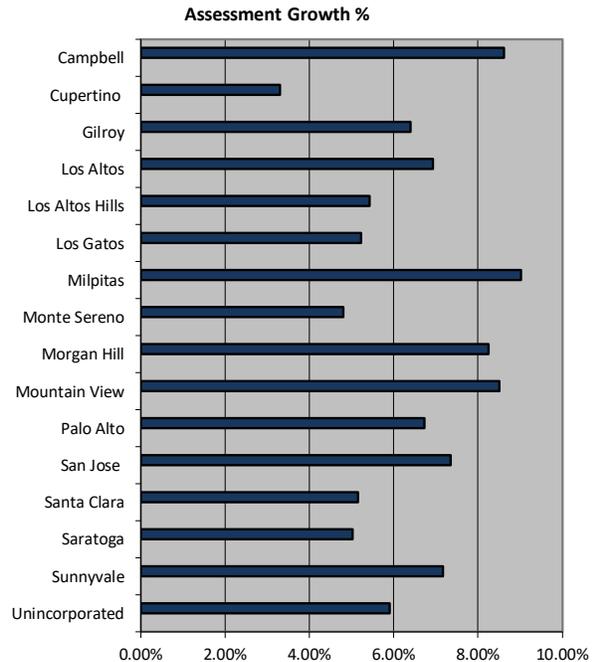
(1) 2019-20 Local Secured Assessed Valuation: \$13,509,034,656

(2) Excludes the value of tax-exempt properties.

Source: California Municipal Statistics, Inc.

Economic Factors

Santa Clara County Assessment Roll Growth by City			
(Values in \$Billions*)			
Santa Clara County Cities	Total Roll 2020	Total Roll 2019	Percent Growth**
Campbell	\$ 11.06	\$ 10.19	8.61%
Cupertino	26.01	25.18	3.30%
Gilroy	9.26	8.70	6.40%
Los Altos	16.81	15.72	6.93%
Los Altos Hills	8.52	8.08	5.42%
Los Gatos	13.84	13.15	5.23%
Milpitas	19.99	18.34	9.02%
Monte Sereno	2.29	2.19	4.81%
Morgan Hill	10.23	9.45	8.24%
Mountain View	31.91	29.41	8.51%
Palo Alto	39.34	36.86	6.72%
San Jose	195.68	182.28	7.35%
Santa Clara	46.23	43.95	5.16%
Saratoga	16.17	15.40	5.03%
Sunnyvale	49.68	46.35	7.17%
Unincorporated	19.05	17.99	5.90%
TOTALS	\$ 516.07	\$ 483.24	6.79%



*Net of nonreimbursable exemptions

**Percentage based on non-rounded values

Source: Santa Clara County's Office of the County Assessor 2019/20 Annual Report

Major Employers as of June 30, 2019

Organization	Product/Services	Employees
Netflix	Internet Services	2314
El Camino Hospital, Los Gatos	Health Industry	560
Courtside Tennis Club*	Leisure/Recreation	542
Roku*	Internet Services	516
Los Gatos -Saratoga Union High School District*	Education	367
Safeway (3 locations)	Food Industry	314
Los Gatos Elementary School District	Education	281
Vasona Creek Health Care Ctr*	Health Industry	233
Terraces of Los Gatos	Health Industry	228
Good Samaritan Regional Cancer Center	Health Industry	200
Whole Foods Market*	Food Industry	125
Town of Los Gatos*	Town Government	160

*Includes full and part time employees

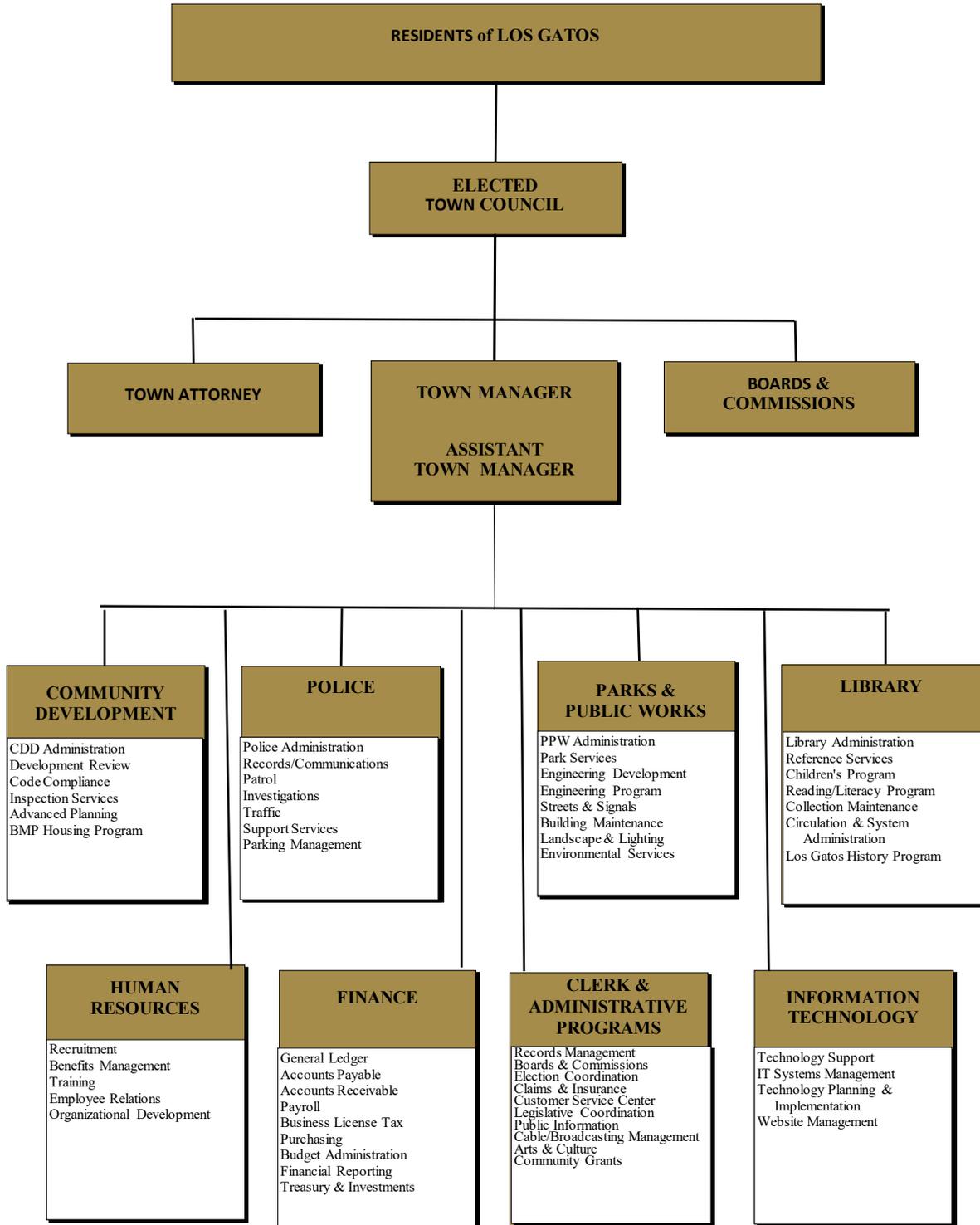
Source: MuniServices, LLC and Staff direct correspondence with Town's local businesses.
Latest date available at the time of publication.

Town Management

Town Manager Laurel Prevetti
Assistant Town Manager Arn Andrews
Town Attorney Robert Schultz
Chief of Police Peter Decena
Community Development Director Joel Paulson
Parks and Public Works Director Matt Morley
Library Director Ryan Baker
Finance Director Stephen Conway
Human Resources Director Lisa Velasco



Town of Los Gatos Organizational Structure



Town of Los Gatos Commissions, Committees, and Advisory Boards

The Town of Los Gatos has a variety of volunteer Commissions, Committees, and Boards, whose purpose is to act in an advisory capacity to the Los Gatos Town Council. Members of these Commissions, Committees, and Boards are appointed by the Town Council. The following is a list of the Town's active Commissions, Committees, and Boards:

Arts and Culture Commission

Encourages the development of art, drama, music, and other creative activities in Los Gatos.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Encourages and provides input into the development of safe and effective bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the Town of Los Gatos.

Building Board of Appeals

Hears appeals of Building regulations.

Community and Senior Services Commission

Ensures the pertinent goals and objectives of the Human Services Element to the General Plan are implemented by regularly assessing the human service needs of the community.

Conceptual Development Advisory Committee

Advises prospective applicants of whether a project is consistent with Town policy prior to initiating the development review process.

Council Finance Committee

In FY 2016/17 the Town expanded the Town Council Finance Committee to include three new non-voting members from the community. In addition to serving as an audit Committee to review the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, the Committee also recommends strategies to manage the Town's unfunded pension and Other Post Employment liabilities, and identify additional revenue sources

Council Policy Committee

Reviews and discusses Town policy updates and makes recommendations to Town Council.

General Plan Committee

Provides assistance to the Community Development Department, Planning Commission, and Town Council on all matters relating to the General Plan or any Specific Plan.

Historic Preservation Committee

Advises the Planning Commission and Town Council concerning matters pertaining to historic preservation. Determines and issues approval for minor exterior alterations to historic structures.

Library Board

Represents the community in making recommendations regarding Library services.

Town of Los Gatos
Commissions, Committees, and Advisory Boards

Parks Commission

Provides advisory oversight for issues related to public parks, off-street trails, open space, grounds, street trees, and town beautification.

Personnel Board

Hears appeals submitted by any person in the classified services, relative to any disciplinary action or alleged violation of Town ordinance, and certifies its findings and recommendations.

Planning Commission

Takes actions and makes recommendations to the Town Council regarding planning, zoning administration, and other land use issues.

Sales Tax Oversight Committee

Provides mandatory financial audits, and yearly reports to the community to ensure funds are spent in accordance with the Town Council objectives stated in Ordinance 2274 and Measure G.

Town Pension and OPEB Trusts Oversight Committee

Provides fiduciary oversight of the Town's Pension and Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) IRS Section 115 Trusts.

Transportation and Parking Commission

Advises the Town Council on matters pertaining to transportation Town-wide and parking in the Central Business District.

Youth Commission

Provides young people a voice in the Los Gatos community and functions as an advisory board to the Town Council on youth-related issues.