



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REPORT

MEETING DATE: 04/01/2021
ITEM: 1
DESK ITEM

DATE: March 31, 2021

TO: General Plan Update Advisory Committee

FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Review and Discussion of the Revised Initial Draft of the Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Element.

REMARKS:

Attachment 4 contains public comment received after the completion of the Addendum Report. A copy of this public comment letter is also included with the Desk Item for Item 2 on this agenda, as it includes comments on both items.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachments previously received with the April 1, 2021 Staff Report:

1. Revised Initial Draft of Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Element
2. Comment Response Summary Table

Attachment received with this Addendum Report:

3. Committee Member Comments

Attachment received with this Desk Item:

4. Public Comment

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Senior Planner

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April 1, 2021

Los Gatos General Plan Advisory Commission
110 E Main St.
Los Gatos, CA 95030

Re: Public Comment Item #1 and #2

Dear Chairperson Hanssen and Members of the General Plan Advisory Committee:

My name is Giulianna Pendleton and I am a life-long resident of Los Gatos. I am highly interested in the General Plan update process and committed to helping make our town a more environmentally friendly, sustainable, and ecologically sound place. I read the materials for the , April 1st GPAC meeting item #1, Review and Discussion of the Revised Initial Draft Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Element, and have some suggestions.

Under policy RSEJ-3.2, “Negative Impacts from Potential Hazards”, reading “Reduce negative impacts associated with environmental hazards, including, but not limited to, industrial operations and roadway-generated air and noise pollution, through the enforcement of additional project specific mitigations for all development” there is room to reference reducing town lighting, include policy for town infrastructure, and reduce light pollution. I recommend it instead read:

*Reduce negative impacts associated with environmental hazards, including, but not limited to, industrial operations, **town infrastructure**, and roadway-generated air, **light**, and noise pollution, through the enforcement of additional project specific mitigations for all development.*

Moreover, under policy RSEJ-4.3 “Access to Community Assets”, reading “Determine and address any gaps between neighborhoods, commercial service areas, recreation facilities, education, medical services, and other community assets in the Town to provide equitable access to these assets and facilitate physical activity in everyday life,” I believe there is room to include more equitable access to parks and green space as well as increasing mental health, not just physical activity. I recommend it read:

*Determine and address any gaps between neighborhoods, commercial service areas, recreation facilities, **parks and natural space**, education, medical services, and other community assets in the Town to provide equitable access to these assets and facilitate physical activity **and mental and emotional health** in everyday life.*

Finally, under the goal RSEJ-4 “Ensure all residents have access to healthy foods, schools, parks/recreation areas/open spaces, medical services, and other amenities”, I would like to propose an additional policy to promote increased and equitable distribution of tree canopy, parks, and green space. I propose it read:

RSEJ-4.6 Equitable Access and Distribution of Tree Canopy
Ensure equitable distribution of tree canopy, green space, and parks to increase quality of life and promote mental and emotional health. Develop a study to measure tree canopy distribution throughout the Town and encourage the use of native plants when increasing green space.

Ensuring flourishing native natural spaces, decreasing pollutants (including light pollution) for all populations, and increasing the tree canopy and amount of available green space in our Town will help increase qualities of life, make our town more resilient against climate change, and improve the health of our surrounding biotic communities.

Additionally, I have some suggestions for agenda item #2, Review and Discussion of Initial Draft General Plan Introduction. As a life-long resident of Los Gatos, I am deeply committed to not just ensuring the health of our town, but including within that, the health and flourishing of our biotic communities. We need to commit to the protection and enhancement of our natural lands if we are to ensure the health of our region in the coming decades. While the concept of sustainability references the conservation of our natural environment for present and future generations, I think we can go even farther to protect and enhance our natural spaces within the General Plan's Guiding Principles. Specifically, I think the protection and enhancement of our natural environment should be a separate guiding principle from sustainability. Sustainability is a technology driven solution to using as much of a resource as we can without taking away from present and future generations, usually with an anthropocentric focus. However, if we have a separate guiding principle for the protection and enhancement of our natural environment, we would be committing to the conservation and improved health of our surrounding biotic community. We would be acknowledging that, as humans, we are not the only species occupying this town's space and we would be respecting the right of nature to habitat, live, and thrive for present and future generations.

Likewise, while there is a guiding principle for protecting natural resources, "Protect the natural resources and scenic assets that define Los Gatos, including open space preserves, recreational trails, surrounding hillsides, and natural waterways," I do not think this adequately centers the rights of nature. In referencing our natural spaces as resources, we would be implying that these natural environments exist for the benefit of the human community, when in fact we should be preserving, conserving, and enhancing these spaces because of their inherent right to exist. While a by-product of protecting these spaces will be increased qualities of life for our Town's community, we need to shift how we see our natural environment from resources to our biotic community.

After reading the Introduction, and specifically the Guiding Principles, I have some suggestions. I propose moving the guiding principle "Protect Natural Resources" to above the sustainability principle and changing it to read:

*Protect Natural ~~Resources~~ Environment
Protect ~~and enhance~~ the natural ~~resources environment~~ and ~~scenic assets~~ biotic communities
that define Los Gatos, including ~~but not limited to~~ open space preserves, recreational trails,
surrounding hillsides, and natural waterways.*

I believe it is crucial for our town to protect and enhance our local natural spaces, not just for our own present and future generations, but for the biotic communities' as well. Thank you for your time and consideration while reading this comment.

Sincerely,

Giulianna Pendleton