

2 VISION

A. What Makes Los Gatos Special

What makes Los Gatos special is its small-town atmosphere, strong sense of place, varied architecture, reminders of the past, traditions, unique physical setting, good schools, low crime rate, and the concerned and involved people who make up the community. 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 should:

- ◆ Foster a pedestrian-oriented community with a small-town character;
- ◆ Maintain a balanced, well-designed mix of residential, commercial, service and open space uses through integrated land use planning;
- ◆ Be a full-service community that is also environmentally sensitive;
- ◆ 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, art and cultural amenities and that is supportive of high quality education.

The Town has an eclectic mix of building styles. It boasts a unique combination of old and new buildings that are indicative of a community that has evolved over a period of time. The Town's architecture ranges from a few homes built in the 1850s to a beautifully preserved mix of Victorian cottages and Craftsman bungalows, some Victorian and Art Deco commercial buildings, post World War II ranch houses and postmodern homes and commercial buildings from more recent decades. The Town demonstrates that it is possible to value innovation while appreciating and preserving the past.

B. Role of the General Plan in Achieving the Vision

The overall role of the 2020 General Plan is to provide a framework to ensure that the Town:

- ◆ Is a full-service community that is also environmentally sensitive;
- ◆ Maintains a balanced, well-designed mix of residential, commercial, service, and open space uses through integrated land use planning that fosters a pedestrian-oriented community consistent with a small-town character;
- ◆ Maintains and expands existing park and open space land to maintain and enhance quality of life and promote sustainability;
- ◆ Meets the changing needs of the Town's youth and senior populations;
- ◆ Supports 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;
- ◆ Provides a well-run, efficient municipal government that is fiscally healthy with high levels of public safety, recreational, art and cultural amenities and that is committed to a high quality of life;
- ◆ Promotes a sustainable and environmentally conscientious community through conservation of resources, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and smart-growth practices; and
- ◆ Provides housing that meets the needs of a diverse community.

C. Vision Statement

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 Highway 85, 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 of the world, Silicon Valley. People feel safe here. The Town provides excellent schools, a won-

derful Downtown, diverse shopping experiences, and an open and responsive government. It offers amenities, support, and a high quality of life to all residents, including youth and seniors. It incorporates a network of beautiful, well-maintained parks and safe, accessible trails. Its citizens and its government understand the importance of sustainability and are committed to making choices that protect and preserve Los Gatos's valuable natural environment and reduce global environmental impacts.

Los Gatos is a truly special place, and residents want to protect their community from the increasing development pressures of the region. Residents expect all new development to fit into the fabric of the community and they expect that new businesses will enhance their high quality of life. Residents hold proposed development projects to a higher standard because what is approved in other communities may not be acceptable in Los Gatos.

New development must keep pace with the community's needs and must reflect the community's values. Extreme care is used in approving all new development applications. The impacts of new development are evaluated in light of the development's overall benefit to the community. In addition, the benefit of new development is measured against the ability of the proposed development and its architectural style to harmonize with existing development while minimizing impacts on existing residential neighborhoods and infrastructure. Input from surrounding residents and property owners is a major consideration during any development review process.

Preserving the small-town character of Los Gatos requires attention to a collection of related issues, including human scale of development, historic preservation, density and intensity, population growth, Downtown preservation, development in the Highway 85/North Forty area, congestion, open space, views of the hills, the type of businesses located in Town, protection of the Town's various neighborhoods, and community design.

The Town can utilize three important means for ensuring the continuity of values:

- ◆ Providing mechanisms for broad public participation in government in general and planning in particular;
- ◆ Taking initiative to coordinate with other jurisdictions on regional issues that impact the Town's character and quality of life;
- ◆ Consistent and resolute enforcement of the General Plan, specific plans and the Town code.

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 General Plan is the Town's guide to achieve this vision.

Many of the issues identified in the General Plan are sustainability issues, including: open space, hillside preservation, environmental quality, natural plant and animal life conservation, resource conservation and community design.