

Conservation Element

INTRODUCTION

300. Residents of Los Altos Hills are committed to protecting the creeks and rolling hills, the oak woodlands and chaparral that characterize the community and create one of California's signature landscapes. Maintaining the Town's character and quality of life depends upon the wise management and use of the natural environment and other unique resources.
301. The Conservation Element addresses the protection and management of natural resources in the Los Altos Hills planning area. It also addresses the conservation of other unique community resources such as historic sites. The element identifies important resources, defines conservation policy, and outlines programs for implementation.

302. This is one of seven elements mandated by the state. It satisfies state requirements for a Conservation Element by including policies pertaining to the following subjects:

- Creeks and riparian areas
- Trees and plants
- Wildlife species and habitat
- Air quality
- Water resources
- Soil resources
- Mineral resources
- Energy conservation
- Waste reduction and recycling
- Historic sites and structures
- Environmental integrity



Robert Shaw

Byrne Preserve in the Spring

For convenience these resources are addressed in separate sections, but their interrelationships should be recognized and cherished as part of the area's ecosystem.

303. The Conservation Element is closely related to other elements, including the Land Use Element, the Open Space and Recreation Element, and the Pathway Element. The preservation and use of open space is addressed in the Open Space and Recreation Element. Natural hazards are addressed in the Safety Element.
304. The Conservation Element provides a framework for the conservation and use of natural and historic resources. Some aspects of conservation programs can be accomplished solely through public efforts, while others can only be realized by appealing to the community spirit of the owners of private property within the Town. This element is concerned with policies and programs, requiring both public and private action, that will conserve and enhance the natural environment and unique qualities of the planning area.

CREEKS AND RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

305. Creeks and their associated riparian corridors are important public assets that provide unique ecological, aesthetic, and recreational values to the community. The Los Altos Hills stream system contains some of the most intact and valuable riparian habitat in the San Francisco Bay region. Many miles of streams and their tributaries flow through the Los Altos Hills Planning Area, including unnamed watercourses and the following named creeks:

- Adobe Creek
- Barron Creek
- Deer Creek
- Dry Creek
- Hale Creek
- Loyola Creek
- Magdalena Creek
- Matadero Creek
- Purissima Creek
- Permanente Creek
- Robleda Creek
- Summerhill Creek



Adobe Creek

306. Creeks and riparian areas are critically important as wildlife habitat and migratory corridors. Many of the Town's riparian areas are contiguous with riparian areas in larger adjacent open space preserves such as Rancho San Antonio, Los Trancos, and Arastradero, which significantly increases their ecological value. Riparian areas also are essential in maintaining creek stability and water quality. Healthy riparian vegetation adjacent to watercourses stabilizes streambanks, absorbs water, and filters pollutants. Creeks and riparian corridors also provide significant aesthetic and recreational values. Many of the stream canyons are essential links in the Town's pathway system.
307. The presence of invasive, non-native plant species (e.g., Italian thistle, pampas grass, and arundo) in riparian corridors has an adverse effect on native vegetation and reduces the hydrologic function and wildlife value. Timely removal of invasive species will preserve the quality and function of riparian areas and avoid much more expensive restoration expenses in the future.
308. Owners of property intersected by creeks and riparian corridors are faced with a confusing array of requirements and restrictions by various agencies. A clear set of guidelines and standards for riparian corridors would make the planning process more objective and ensure that General Plan goals and policies are carried out.

GOAL 1

**Conserve creeks and riparian areas as open space amenities
and natural habitat areas.**

- Policy 1.1** **Avoid fencing, piping, and channelization of creeks when flood control and public safety can be achieved through measures that preserve the natural environment and habitat of the creek.**
- Policy 1.2** **Work with the Santa Clara Valley Water District and other relevant regional agencies to enhance riparian corridors and provide adequate flood control by use of low impact restoration strategies.**
- Policy 1.3** **Preserve the integrity of riparian corridors as unique and environmentally sensitive resources.**
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- Program 1.1 Continue to require that structures be set back at least 25 feet from the top of creek banks. To ensure adequate protection of these valuable resources, review the 25-foot setback and consider expanding it to the driplines of mature oak trees within the setback.
- Program 1.2 Continue to require open space easements along creeks and riparian corridors to ensure that these areas remain in their natural condition.
- Program 1.3 Continue to comply with the requirements of CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) for proposed development that might impact creeks and riparian corridors. Other relevant local, state and federal agencies including the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are consulted as appropriate.
- Program 1.4 Develop a comprehensive riparian policy that compiles and clarifies all relevant requirements for affected property owners.

TREES AND PLANTS

309. Oak woodlands and chaparral form the predominant vegetative communities on the hillsides leading up to Monte Bello Ridge and Kaiser Ridge. They serve to prevent erosion and protect the quality of the watershed. These wooded areas also support a wide variety of animal life.
310. Three other significant vegetative types that occur within the planning area are mixed oak woodlands, chaparral, and grassland-savanna areas. Generally, the oak woodlands tend to support a higher diversity of organisms than do grasslands. The chaparral areas represent a particularly high fire hazard during the dry seasons of the year.
311. Several species of rare, threatened, or endangered plants such as Santa Cruz Manzanita and Western Leatherwood have the potential to occur in the Los Altos Hills planning area. The potential locations for these species are primarily within the grassland and chaparral habitats in the foothills.



Jitze Couperus

**Heritage Oak Tree at
O'Keefe Lane Preserve**

HERITAGE TREES

Trees are a valuable asset to the community because they beautify landscapes, increase property value, improve air quality, and reduce energy consumption. The Town's Heritage Tree Ordinance protects large oaks and other trees determined to be of special significance. The tree ordinance requires a permit to remove any tree defined as a Heritage Oak or Heritage Tree.

GOAL 2

Protect native and naturalized trees and plants.

- Policy 2.1** **Minimize disturbance of the natural terrain and vegetation.**
- Policy 2.2** **Preserve and protect native and naturalized plants, with special attention to preservation of unique, rare or endangered species and plant communities such as oak woodlands.**
- Policy 2.3** **Preserve and protect Heritage Trees, including native oaks and other significant trees, on public and private property.**
- Policy 2.4** **Encourage the planting of native trees and shrubs to provide a substantial buffer between the roadways and adjoining properties in harmony with the general character of the Town.**
- Policy 2.5** **Encourage the removal and prevention of the spreading of aggressive exotics such as Italian thistle, stinkweed, pampas grass, acacia, yellow star thistle, French broom, Scotch broom and eucalyptus.**
- Policy 2.6** **Encourage the removal of poison oak where allowed by law.**
- Policy 2.7** **Avoid the development of environmentally sensitive areas that are rich in wildlife or of a fragile ecological nature, such as areas of rare or endangered species of plants, or riparian areas.**
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- Program 2.1 Continue to enforce the Heritage Tree Ordinance, which protects large oak trees and other significant trees by requiring a special permit for removal.
- Program 2.2 Continue to require the replacement of any Heritage Oaks or other significant trees that are removed under special permit or as part of approved development projects.
- Program 2.3 Continue to limit development within the dripline of Heritage Oaks.
- Program 2.4 Continue to refer site development applications to the Environmental Design Committee and Open Space Committee for review and comment.
- Program 2.5 Encourage the dedication of conservation/open space easements or the public acquisition of areas that are rich in wildlife or of a fragile ecological nature to ensure their protection.
- Program 2.6 In the landscaping of individual sites and replanting where original vegetation has been destroyed or removed, encourage the use of native rather than exotic plants. In those areas of high fire risk, however, it may be preferable to introduce carefully chosen exotics with high fire resistance characteristics.
- Program 2.7 Develop a program to manage and control invasive species, particularly along creeks and their associated riparian corridors.

WILDLIFE SPECIES AND HABITAT

312. The open space areas in and around Los Altos Hills provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife, including mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and insects. Some of the most common mammals include the cottontail rabbit, hare, black-tail deer, western gray squirrel, opossum, red fox, gray fox, raccoon, coyote, and bobcat. Common birds include the red-shouldered hawk, barn owl, acorn woodpecker, western scrub-jay, turkey vulture, and California quail.
313. A number of species have been identified by federal and state governments as endangered, threatened, or sensitive and may be present in the Los Altos Hills planning area. These include the California Red-legged Frog, the Northwestern Pond Turtle, and Cooper's Hawk.
314. In the past, development occurred with little conscious regard for impacts on wildlife habitat, sometimes with the result that natural species were driven out. Today the open space areas in and around Los Altos Hills are relatively undisturbed and serve as habitat for a diverse wildlife population. Conservation of this habitat is not only important for the protection of wildlife, but also for the conservation of the semi-rural atmosphere of the community. To protect areas of significant wildlife habitat, such as creeks and riparian corridors, the dedication of conservation/open space easements should be encouraged.
315. There is a need for planning to provide for effective protection and conservation of the Town's wildlife heritage, while continuing to allow appropriate development and land use. Planning for natural movement of wildlife can help to avoid, minimize and compensate for serious negative impacts on wildlife and humans. Areas that link wildlife habitat have become vital because native animals such as deer, fox, bobcat and coyote are prevented by roads, fences, homes, and other development from moving freely as they once did.
316. Wildlife move through the planning area along natural passageways, particularly along creeks and riparian areas that provide sources of food, water and shelter. Many of these are already Open Space Conservation Areas that protect wildlife and ecologically significant habitat.

GOAL 3

Maintain and enhance the integrity of wildlife habitat.

Policy 3.1 Maintain and protect creeks and riparian corridors for wildlife that use this resource for food, shelter, migration and breeding.

Program 3.1 Continue to require open space easements along creeks and riparian corridors.

Program 3.2 Inventory wildlife habitat areas and the suite of animals in those areas.

Program 3.3 Assess the potential for development patterns to fragment and isolate significant wildlife habitats.

AIR QUALITY

317. Air quality is a regional issue that does not respect jurisdictional boundaries. Every city and county in the Bay Area must accept a portion of the responsibility for addressing air quality problems. Although air quality in the San Francisco Air Basin has improved considerably since the 1970s, the area still does not meet California Air Resource Board (CARB) standards for carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter smaller than 10 microns in diameter (PM-10s).
318. Motor vehicles are the primary source of air pollution in Los Altos Hills and the Bay Area. Other sources include road dust, construction and grading activities, wood-burning stoves and fireplaces.

GOAL 4 **Improve air quality.**

Policy 4.1 Support regional, state, and federal programs that improve air quality in the Bay Area.

- Program 4.1 Encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation by maintaining and developing the Town's pathways system for bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.
- Program 4.2 Require all new fireplace inserts to comply with EPA-approved standards.
- Program 4.3 Monitor construction and grading activities to control dust.



Pathways encourage alternative modes of transportation.



WATER RESOURCES

319. Conservation of water resources encompasses a broad range of issues, ranging from water supply and water quality to the protection of groundwater and surface water feature like San Francisco Bay. Policies and programs and needed to ensure that a healthful, reliable supply of water remains available in the future.

DRINKING WATER

320. The Town's drinking water is provided by two water suppliers: Purissima Hills Water District and the California Water Service Company (Cal Water). Purissima Hills Water District is a public agency that provides water to residents in the northern two-thirds of Los Altos Hills; Cal Water is an investor-owned utility that serves the remaining area. A few residents supplement their water supply with well water.
321. The amount of water available is constrained. Purissima Hills presently obtains all of its water from San Francisco's Hetch Hetchy system and is exceeding its supply assurance by 25-35 percent. Capacity limitations in the Hetch Hetchy system may be reached in six to eight years, or sooner in times of drought. Cal Water obtains the water supplied to Los Altos Hills from the Santa Clara Valley Water District via pipelines from the SCVWD's Rincoñada treatment plant and from company-owned wells. During the dry season, the plant and pipelines are at capacity.
322. When system capacity limits are reached, or in times of drought, water use may be subject to rationing or other restrictions. Purissima Hills may be limited to its contractual allotment, and Cal Water may have to implement some restrictions based on the supply available during drought or other occasions of constrained supply. Landscaping that is heavily dependent on irrigation may not survive.
323. Over two-thirds of all water used each year in the Purissima Hills Water District is for irrigation of landscaping. During the summer dry season (June through September) water used for landscaping on average is five times that of the rainy season.
324. To encourage the conservation of water resources, Purissima Hills has established a progressive, multi-tiered rate structure. In addition, Purissima Hills and Cal Water have implemented programs such as the provision of homeowner assistance in water management and the distribution of water-efficient appliances. These water conservation programs have the added benefit of reducing energy consumption. Statewide, pumping water is the leading use of electrical power. For Purissima Hills Water District, the cost of power is a significant expenditure, trailing only the costs for water and manpower.

GROUNDWATER

325. Groundwater in the Los Altos Hills planning area is contained in both shallow and deep aquifers formed in the alluvial deposits of streams running from the foothills to the San Francisco Bay. Groundwater recharge occurs mostly naturally, through rainfall. Some areas have higher recharge rates than others, depending on factors like soil porosity, clay content, and depth to bedrock. In the Santa Clara Valley, the areas with the highest recharge rates tend to be along the creeks and on the western edge of the valley floor, just below the toe of the foothills. In the past, wells have supplied water to Town residents during times of drought.

SURFACE WATER

326. Surface water bodies in and around Los Altos Hills include lakes, creeks and San Francisco Bay. Lakes include Quarry Lake, as well as Boronda Lake in Foothills Park and Arastradero Lake in the Arastradero Preserve (both located in Palo Alto). Four major creeks—Matadero, Hale, Barron, and Adobe—run from the foothills to the San Francisco Bay estuary system. In addition to the natural drainage system, a network of storm drains collects runoff from streets and roads in Los Altos Hills and carries it to the creeks and San Francisco Bay.
327. The primary source of water pollution in Los Altos Hills is urban runoff. Runoff from streets, parking lots and private yards may contain oil, grease, pesticides and herbicides, heavy metals, paints and household chemicals, construction materials, sediment and eroded soil. Automobiles are a major source of many of these pollutants. Ultimately, these pollutants end up in creeks and in San Francisco Bay, where they have caused substantial water quality degradation. To improve the quality of stormwater runoff, the Town actively participates in the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program.

Best Management Practices for Water Quality

The following Best Management Practices (BMPs) can help control the use of pollutants and prevent their discharge into the environment.

For Residents:

- Proper storage, use and disposal of hazardous household cleaners, fertilizers, pesticide, and garden supplies
- Participation in household hazardous waste collection programs
- Recycling of motor oil and anti-freeze
- Refraining from illegal dumping
- Reducing vehicle use
- Reducing discharges from car washing and maintenance

For Contractors:

- Proper methods of paving, construction and painting
- Use of environmentally safe materials
- Proper methods of delivery and storage of materials
- Responsible management and disposal of solid waste, contaminated soil, and concrete waste
- Erosion control measures
- Proper sanitary sewer and septic waste management

GOAL 5

Protect and conserve water resources.

- Policy 5.1** **Keep or restore major drainage courses in their natural condition insofar as possible because of their importance in supplying major vegetation, land forms and wildlife habitat, and storm drainage.**
- Policy 5.2** **Protect the Town's groundwater from the adverse impacts of urban uses.**
- Policy 5.3** **Encourage the conservation and efficient use of water in new and existing residences.**
- Policy 5.4** **Work with Purissima Hills Water District and Cal Water Service Company in their efforts to encourage water conservation.**
- Policy 5.5** **Reduce non-point source pollution in urban runoff.**
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- Program 5.1 Encourage the maintenance of adequate groundwater supplies by providing information on retention ponds, vegetative swales, and unpaved drainage ditches.
- Program 5.2 In the planning, environmental impact review, and completion of all land development or land alteration projects, direct particular attention toward the protection of the natural water system.
- Program 5.3 Work with water purveyors to inform homeowners of their potential water usage in new landscape projects and to recognize the benefits of water efficient landscapes without significant burden to the homeowners.
- Program 5.4 Consider incentives for property owners meeting certain water conservation criteria and incentives to encourage water retention ponds, water reuse and recycling, vegetated swales and other approved methods of runoff control.
- Program 5.5 Continue to promote water conservation through public education.
- Program 5.6 Actively participate in programs such as the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program to improve the quality of stormwater runoff.
- Program 5.7 Continue to implement the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Ordinance.
- Program 5.8 Develop and implement public education programs on water quality issues, including Best Management Practices (BMPs) for residents, contractors and Town employees.
- Program 5.9 Continue to limit the amount of impervious surface in new development to reduce urban runoff into storm drains, creeks and the San Francisco Bay.

SOIL RESOURCES

328. Soil, a mixture of mineral and organic matter, is produced very slowly as native rock surfaces are eroded by wind, water and gravity. Soil sustains plant life, is an important natural resource, and is a crucial part of the ecosystem. High-quality topsoil can easily be harmed by human activities and can lose its life-sustaining capabilities or be lost to erosion and sedimentation if it is not cared for properly.
329. Soil erosion occurs when soils are removed from their original location and transported by wind, water and gravity. Erosion causes the loss of fertile topsoil, carves deep ruts and gullies, and fills in creeks and marsh lands. Soils settle and accumulate in a particular location during sedimentation. Erosion and sedimentation are natural processes that can speed up when grading and other construction work are done, especially when the work is done near creeks or during the rainy season. Plants shield the soil and bind it together, helping to prevent erosion. It is also important to use proper grading and construction techniques to prevent erosion.
330. Soils can be contaminated when chemicals or other pollutants are improperly released and the soil becomes toxic or harmful to plants, animals and people. The improper use of chemical pesticides and herbicides, as well as spills and leaks can contaminate soils.

GOAL 6

Protect and conserve soil resources.

- Policy 6.1 Encourage soil stabilization measures that mitigate soil erosion and sedimentation.**
- Policy 6.2 Ensure the proper use, storage and disposal of toxic chemicals to prevent soil contamination.**
- Policy 6.3 Minimize the removal of vegetation and require replanting to maintain soil stability, prevent erosion, and retain the aesthetic quality of the community.**

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- Program 6.1 Protect and preserve native plant communities next to creeks to help prevent erosion.
- Program 6.2 Continue to require erosion control measures on construction sites.
- Program 6.3 Reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides on Town-owned properties to the extent possible.
- Program 6.4 Prohibit the dumping of any waste material that may harm or destroy soil quality and character.
- Program 6.5 Ensure that proposed septic systems meet the health and safety standards of Santa Clara County so that soil and groundwater pollution does not occur.

MINERAL RESOURCES

331. Mineral resources that have been found and extracted in the planning area are primarily construction aggregate deposits. Neary Quarry, which supplied base rock for the construction of Moffett Field and crushed rock for Highways 101 and 280, is no longer in operation. In 1996 the Town approved the subdivision of Neary Quarry, which has since been developed with single-family homes. Permanente Quarry owned by Hanson Cement and Gypsum Company is still in operation. The Permanente Quarry is located on unincorporated lands in Santa Clara County, within the Sphere of Influence of the City of Cupertino. The operation is of concern to residents of Los Altos Hills because of its proximity and potential impacts on the surrounding area, particularly Kaiser Ridge.
332. The preservation of Kaiser Ridge, located within the Cupertino Sphere of Influence, will depend on efforts by the City of Cupertino and Santa Clara County to regulate the operation of Hanson Cement and Gypsum Company. The Town should support Cupertino and the County in these efforts and should keep abreast of the quarrying aspects of the Hanson Gypsum operation to ensure that the skyline that has been quarried is rehabilitated.

GOAL 7

Minimize environmental impacts of the extraction and transport of mineral resources.

- Policy 7.1** In the context of the local physical situation, the extraction of rock, sand, gravel and mineral resources shall be permitted only when compatible with goals for maintaining a quality environment.
- Policy 7.2** Minimize all potentially adverse environmental impacts from extraction and transport of mineral resources, including, but not limited to:
- Nuisances such as dust, odor, debris and noise.
 - Disruption and damage to natural features, such as ground cover, topography, drainage, habitat, groundwater, and related issues.
 - Increased traffic volumes and damage to road surfaces.
- Policy 7.3** Ensure the reclamation of mineral resource extraction sites for safe, attractive and beneficial future use.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

333. Californians have become more energy conscious since the energy crisis of the 1970s. The escalating cost of energy and the ever-decreasing availability of fuel sources have impelled government agencies to conserve energy and look for alternatives to the use of non-renewable resources.
334. The Town of Los Altos Hills demonstrated its commitment to energy efficiency and the use of solar power when the new \$4.5 million Town Hall was constructed in 2005. Reduced energy and water consumption were major objectives in the building's design. The new Town Hall features a 30 kW photovoltaic system, which supplies approximately half of the electrical energy used by the municipal center annually. The solar system was made possible in part by a grant from the Packard Foundation of Los Altos. Another feature of the building is the use of natural day-lighting, including strategically placed solar light tubes to reduce electrical lighting load.



New energy-efficient Town Hall includes drought-tolerant landscaping.

Solar panels supply about half of the electrical needs at Town Hall.



335. To encourage the use of solar power, Los Altos Hills has developed the following incentives:
- Building permit fees are waived for the construction or installation of solar energy generation equipment.
 - For ground-mounted photovoltaic systems, up to 500 square feet may be exempt from development area calculations.
 - For roof-mounted photovoltaic systems, a bonus of up to 500 square feet of development area may be granted.

Other measures may be proposed by the Environmental Initiatives Committee, a standing committee charged with the development of incentives for energy conservation and other environmental objectives.

GOAL 8

**Promote energy-efficient construction and the use of
alternative energy sources.**

- Policy 8.1 Promote the incorporation of energy conservation measures in new construction.**
- Policy 8.2 Encourage active and passive solar energy design in building and site development.**
- Policy 8.3 Expand the use of alternative fuels for Town vehicles by purchasing hybrids and other fuel-efficient vehicles.**
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- Program 8.1 Incorporate energy efficiency measures in new Town facilities.
- Program 8.2 Continue to develop and offer incentives for energy conservation.



**The Town's hybrid vehicles
are fuel efficient.**

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

336. Reducing waste provides direct and indirect environmental benefits including cleaner air and water, reduced resource and energy use, and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. California's Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 set an ambitious goal for cities to divert 50 percent of all solid waste from landfills by 2000 through source reduction, recycling, and composting. The law also requires cities to adopt Source Reduction and Recycling Plans that specify how they will achieve the waste reduction goals. Los Altos Hills adopted such a source reduction plan in 1994.

337. Los Altos Garbage Company (LAGCo) provides residential and commercial garbage and curbside recycling services to the residents of Los Altos Hills. In cooperation with the Town, LAGCo has recently started single-stream recycling, making it possible to use a single container for all recyclables rather than sorting them into different containers.



GOAL 9

Reduce the amount of solid waste generated in Los Altos Hills.

Policy 9.1 Promote source reduction and recycling throughout the community.

- Program 9.1 Continue to implement the Town's 1994 Source Reduction and Recycling Element.
- Program 9.2 In Town purchasing, encourage the purchase of products that minimize packaging, contain recycled materials, and can be reused or recycled.
- Program 9.3 Consider supporting new ideas and innovative proposals that will promote recycling and other environmentally sound practices.
- Program 9.4 Continue to work with Los Altos Garbage Company to implement single-stream recycling and other ways to encourage waste reduction and recycling.

HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES

338. The preservation of historic sites and structures helps maintain and enhance the unique character of Los Altos Hills. Some of the sites listed below have already been recognized for their historic importance and are registered state historic landmarks. However, the historic importance of all sites listed below should be preserved in a manner most appropriate to the individual site.
339. The Town should explore the possibility of having existing historic structures designated as state historical landmarks. Historic sites without structures may have to be purchased if the Town determines that historic significance warrants preservation in a natural state. In any case, the historic significance of all sites should be evaluated prior to development. At minimum, if the site is found to be of some historic significance, provision for historic commemoration should be required as part of development. In addition, the Town should establish a program for the evaluation and preservation of historical sites.
340. While it is the intent to preserve identified resources for the benefit of the Town, it is recognized that there will be circumstances where it will not always be possible to achieve preservation. Such determinations cannot always be made in advance and therefore prudent decisions must be made when individual resources are before the Town for action.
341. An inventory of historic sites and structures in the Los Altos Hills planning area is listed in Appendix A. The inventory is intended to be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as needed.



Heritage House

Formerly the Eschenbruecher House in Los Altos, the building was donated to the Town and moved to its present site adjacent to Town Hall in 1984. To acquaint today's residents and visitors with the early 1900s character of the Town, apricot and prune trees were planted behind the building, where a collection of vintage farm equipment is on public display.

GOAL 10

Encourage both public and private efforts to preserve and enhance historic resources.

Policy 10.1 **Preserve, protect and enhance the historic resources of the planning area because they are unique and valuable assets for the community and region.**

Policy 10.2 **Promote community awareness of local history and historic resources for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the Town.**

Program 10.1 Continue to develop a comprehensive inventory and map of historically significant sites and structures. Review Appendix A at least every five years and update the inventory as appropriate. Consider adding the following sites and structures: Heritage House, Finn House, Westwind Community Barn, Packard House, Hidden Villa, Ginzton House, Lois Crozier Hogle House, Fremont Hills Country Club Water Tower, Jensen House and Barn, Eshner House, and Stegner House on South Fork.

The Mills Act is a state law that provides an economic incentive for the restoration and preservation of qualified historic buildings by private property owners. Enacted in 1972, the Mills Act enables participating cities and counties to enter into contracts with owners of qualified historic properties. The contracts grant property tax relief to owners who agree to restore and maintain their historic properties.

ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY

341. The impacts of human development on the natural environment are complex and constantly changing. This section protects the overall integrity of the environment with policies and programs that reduce or mitigate the negative impacts of development in order to make today's health, economic and aesthetic benefits available to future generations.

GOAL 11

Promote and enhance the integrity of the natural environment.

- Policy 11.1** **Develop and implement programs by which the natural environmental features of the planning area can be conserved to the maximum extent feasible and by which areas already unduly disturbed by man can be returned to a more natural condition.**
- Policy 11.2** **Ensure that in the planning, development and use of land, environmental impact is not overlooked, conservation actions are considered, and such evaluations and actions are sufficiently comprehensive and consistent with established guidelines.**
- Policy 11.3** **Conserve the natural character of the planning area in any land development project.**
- Policy 11.4** **Ensure that the scale of building, the siting of development, the design and the materials of construction are harmonious with the natural setting.**
- Policy 11.5** **Ensure that development projects are designed to conserve the natural slope, preserve existing native vegetation, limit invasive species, and conserve natural drainage channels and swales.**
- Policy 11.6** **Participate in and support the conservation efforts of other jurisdictions, agencies or organizations that are of mutual benefit to the Town.**
- Policy 11.7** **Support conservation education programs in the local schools and, when necessary to respond to local problems, initiate and implement specific educational programs or campaigns.**

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- Program 11.1 Environmental Monitoring – Develop a procedure for monitoring known or potential environmental problems to ensure that irreversible damage will not occur. Examples of problems that should be monitored include stream siltation, pollution of subsurface and surface waters, soil erosion, the potential or imminent danger associated with fire hazard areas (in conjunction with the Santa Clara County Fire Department), soil contamination, and the potential or imminent danger from landslides and

other effects of land instability. The extent of monitoring activity that can be conducted is constrained by financial limitations. To the extent possible, Town staff should work with informed and concerned citizens to establish a basic procedure for identifying and tracking the existing or potential problems of greatest concern.

Program 11.2 Specific Remedial Activities – In some cases, remedial activities may require the participation of all segments of the community in order to be effective. In most cases, however, individual initiative by local residents and property owners will be sufficient to carry out specific efforts for protection of the environment, such as:

- Replanting to prevent erosion
- Control or elimination of exotic weed species or undesirable trees and plants
- Minimal use of herbicides and pesticides to avoid contamination of soil and water
- Removal of dead vegetation to reduce fire hazard
- Replacement of highly flammable vegetation with less flammable materials
- Use of native plants in preference to exotics in replanting
- Treatment or removal of diseased or hazardous trees
- Protection of streamside vegetation

These activities may require Town review and approval if they are proposed as part of specific development projects. In cases where the extent of the problem includes an area larger than an individual ownership, cooperative or coordinated effort will be needed. For example, activities such as the removal of any long-standing obstruction to natural drainage or the restoration of stream banks require review and coordination by the Town.

Program 11.3 Public Education – Town Hall should serve as a basic source of information on local environmental issues and conservation programs. Town staff, elected officials and committees such as the Open Space Committee and the Environmental Design Committee should encourage efforts to educate the public with regard to the conservation of natural resources in Los Altos Hills. When other public agencies or conservation groups are sponsoring information sessions on subjects of mutual concern, the Town should assist in publicizing events. This can be done through publications that are made available at Town Hall or through notices posted on the website or bulletin boards at Town Hall.