

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL PLAN

Today, Los Altos is a community grounded in the unique history of its agricultural and railroad culture, yet it is also a community of the 21st century that is prepared to face the challenges ahead. To meet these challenges, the General Plan for Los Altos is the primary source of long-range planning and policy direction that will be used to guide growth and preserve the quality of life within the community.

Since the last comprehensive update of the General Plan in 1987, there have been relatively minor changes to the established community of Los Altos, but many significant changes to the surrounding region. According to the previous General Plan, the population of Los Altos in 1987 was 27,189 persons. Census data for 2000 shows Los Altos with a population of 27,693 persons, representing less than two percent growth over the 13-year period. Comparatively, the population of Santa Clara County and surrounding communities grew at a rate between 12 and 18 percent in the same period.

After the economic recession of the early 1990s, Santa Clara County (Silicon Valley) grew quickly, driven by the new information technology surrounding the internet. Development trends included large employment centers, regional retail centers, and new neighborhoods along major transportation routes. This type of growth commonly required larger, primarily undeveloped land, with infrastructure capacity for this scale of development. As an established community with primarily residential use, small neighborhood commercial areas, and few undeveloped parcels, Los Altos would not easily accommodate this type or scale of employment and housing growth. Thus, unlike many of the surrounding communities

over the past 15 years, Los Altos did not undergo substantial change. Rather, the City focused its planning efforts toward managing and enhancing existing character and land use patterns. Planning will now focus on stimulating new economic growth, revitalizing older areas, assuring public safety, finding new uses for underutilized land, and enhancing the amenities and environmental resources that define Los Altos.

The General Plan is founded upon the community's vision for the City and expresses the community's long-term goals. Implementation of the General Plan will ensure that future development is consistent with the community's goals and that adequate urban services are available to meet the needs of new development. The General Plan provides a continuum between the City's unique traditions and the Los Altos of tomorrow.



LOS ALTOS PLANNING AREA

The geographical area addressed by a General Plan is not limited to a City's corporate limits. State law requires the City to plan for areas outside of its immediate jurisdiction if the areas have a direct relationship to its planning needs. The Los Altos planning area includes the entire incorporated City and unincorporated land areas within the City's Sphere of Influence.



Figure I-1
Los Altos Planning Area



Unincorporated land areas in Santa Clara County abut the City's southern and south-western boundaries.

The Los Altos planning area is located in the northwest portion of Santa Clara County, approximately five miles west of San Francisco Bay at the southern end of the peninsula. Los Altos is surrounded by Mountain View and Palo Alto to the north, Sunnyvale to the east, Cupertino to the south, and Los Altos Hills to the west. Figure I-1 depicts the planning area for Los Altos.

HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY

The community of Los Altos can trace its roots back to the Ohlone and Muwekma Indians, who resided along the area creeks in the early twentieth century. Most of the region was agriculturally based until the development of the railroad. The origins of urban Los Altos began in 1907 with the creation of the town plan centered around the Southern Pacific Railway Station in what is now the Downtown. Several commercial buildings were developed prior to 1940, surrounded by residential use, ranches, and agriculture.

Most of the land within the City's existing boundaries was developed in the two decades following City incorporation in 1952.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF LOS ALTOS

The Vision for the Future provides the foundation of the General Plan and an expression of what the City of Los Altos wants to maintain or become over the next two decades:

In the year 2020, the City of Los Altos continues to support a community-focused lifestyle for its residents, promoted and celebrated through neighborhood and community activities and involvement. The small town atmosphere, enhanced by the village

character of the Downtown and other neighborhood commercial centers, also contributes to this friendly community spirit.

New development and redevelopment is compatible with and sensitive to the existing community. New development reflects the existing small town, semi-rural character of the community with its Downtown commercial area and wooded, quiet, low density residential neighborhoods. People feel safe in their neighborhoods, commercial districts, and schools. In addition, the quality of the City's environmental, open space, and scenic resources is preserved and enhanced. Recreational opportunities are available to meet the needs of all members of the community.

The local circulation system meets the needs of the community while slowing and reducing the amount of traffic in residential neighborhoods and near schools. Within this circulation system, pedestrians and cyclists are able to travel safely and quickly throughout the community.

Appropriate commercial and office uses locate and thrive, providing fiscal stability to the City and a revenue source to finance community improvements. These beneficial businesses operate in harmony with surrounding residential neighborhoods and contribute to the small town atmosphere. Downtown is the city center for traditional events and festivals that serve the entire Los Altos community. Downtown provides goods and services, restaurants, and entertainment for all age groups in our community. The town is active in the evenings as well as during the weekdays and weekends. The streets and sidewalks are clean, and landscaping is attractive. The competition to locate retail businesses Downtown is keen.



A variety of housing options are available to meet the needs of all segments of the community, including the local workforce, residents' children, and the elderly. Mixed-use housing is available and affordable for workers in Los Altos including teachers, City employees, and other members of the local workforce.

Other assets, such as the high quality of the local education system, as well as the City's agricultural past with its historic buildings and remaining orchards, are important to the community. Existing development is well maintained so that Los Altos remains an attractive and enjoyable place to live, work, and play.

PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

California law requires each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan to guide the physical development of the incorporated city and land outside city boundaries that bears a relationship to its planning activities. Fundamentally, the General Plan serves as a blueprint for future growth and development. As such, the plan contains policies and programs designed to provide decision makers with a solid foundation for land use and development decisions.

The Los Altos General Plan represents the values and outlines the vision of the community. The Plan organizes the desires of Los Altos residents with respect to the physical, social, economic, and environmental character of the City. It embodies what the City is now and what it hopes to be in 2020.

In accordance with California Government Code Section 65302, a general plan must address the issues of land use, circulation, housing, noise, safety, conservation, and open space. These issues are discussed in the General Plan to the extent that they apply to Los Altos. The Plan also addresses topics of special and unique interest, including community design, economic develop-

ment, community facilities, infrastructure, and waste disposal. These topics are optional, but reflect issues that are important to the community.

According to state law, the General Plan is the primary document the City utilizes to regulate land use. Consequently, the Zon-

ing Ordinance, Specific Plans, and individual public and private development proposals must be consistent with the Plan goals, policies, and standards.



ORGANIZATION AND USE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The Los Altos General Plan contains goals, policies and plans which are intended to guide land use and development decisions through the year 2020. There are eight individual elements of this Plan, which fulfill the state requirements for a General Plan. Table I-1 shows the relationship between the eight elements of the Los Altos General Plan and the state-mandated elements.

Plan Organization and Use

The General Plan is comprised of this Introduction and eight elements. Each element is a distinct, but integral part of the General Plan. The General Plan is accompanied by a Glossary (Appendix A). Each of the elements is organized according to the following format: (1) Introduction; (2) Plan; (3) Issues, Goals, and Policies; and 4) Implementation Programs Appendix.



**TABLE I-1
RELATIONSHIP OF LOS ALTOS GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS TO STATE-MANDATED ELEMENTS**

Los Altos General Plan Elements	Land Use	Housing	Circulation	Safety	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Optional
Community Design & Historic Resources								■
Land Use	■							
Housing		■						
Economic Development								■
Open Space, Conservation, & Community Facilities					■	■		■
Circulation			■					
Natural Environment & Hazards				■			■	
Infrastructure & Waste Disposal								■

The Introduction of each element describes the focus and the purpose of the element. The Introduction also identifies other Related Laws, Plans and Programs outside of the General Plan that may be used to achieve or relate to specific General Plan goals. The relationship of the element to other General Plan elements is also described in the Introduction.

The Issues, Goals, and Policies section of each element contains a description of identified planning issues, goals and policies related to the element topic. The issues, goals and policies are based on input received from community workshops; members of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC); members of the City Council and Planning Commission; and City staff.

The issues represent the opportunities, constraints or concerns that are addressed by the General Plan. The goals are overall statements of community desires and are comprised of broad statements of purpose or direction. The policies serve as guides to the decision makers in reviewing develop-

ment proposals and making other decisions that affect the future growth and development of Los Altos.

Each element also contains a Plan section. The Plan provides background information regarding existing conditions and an overview of the City's course of action to implement the identified goals and policies. For example, the Land Use Element contains a "Land Use Plan" indicating the types and intensities of land use permitted in Los Altos.

The Implementation Programs Appendix identifies specific actions to achieve the goals, policies and plans identified in each General Plan element. The Implementation Programs Appendix is reviewed and updated periodically to update specific actions, schedules, responsible parties and measures to ensure that General Plan goals, policies and plans are implemented. The Glossary (Appendix A of the General Plan) provides a set of definitions for technical terms used in the Plan.



The organization of the General Plan allows users to easily locate issues of interest and quickly obtain a perspective on the City's policies on the subject. However, General Plan users should realize that the policies in the various elements are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively. Policies are presented as written statements, tables, diagrams and maps. All of these policy components must be considered together when making planning decisions.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE GENERAL PLAN PROGRAM

Public participation played an important role in updating the Los Altos General Plan. Because the General Plan reflects the community goals and objectives, citizen input is essential to identifying issues, formulating goals, and creating the City's vision for 2020. Public participation and education during the General Plan program occurred through the following methods:

- ❖ In the Fall of 1996, prior to project kick-off, the City conducted a community visioning process called the **Community Compass**. The goal of the visioning process was to help the community determine what it wants to be in the future (2020) and what is needed to achieve its vision. Information from the Community Compass report was used in developing the preliminary set of issues for the General Plan.
- ❖ Early in the program, the City hosted a **Transportation Charrette** with Dan Burden and his team from Walkable Communities, Inc. The purpose of the workshop series (including a walking tour) was to educate the community on key transportation issues and possible solutions to carry forward to the General Plan vision and circulation-related goals and policies.
- ❖ Three **Community Workshops** were held during the General Plan program. The first General Plan Community Workshop was held to discuss the key community issues and opportunities that should be reflected in the framework of the General Plan. At the second Community Workshop, the consultant team solicited input on land use and circulation alternatives. At the final Community Workshop, the Preliminary Draft General Plan was presented to the public for consideration.
- ❖ The City Council appointed a **General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)** to represent stakeholders and provide input and recommendations during the General Plan program. Five meetings were held with the GPAC. The first meeting was a program initiation for the purpose of introducing the General Plan program and soliciting input regarding community issues and future vision. The second meeting was held to review and discuss preliminary draft goals and policies. At the third and fourth meetings, the GPAC continued review of the goals and policies and discussed land use and circulation alternatives. The final GPAC meeting was held to review the Preliminary Draft General Plan and provide recommendations to the City's decision makers.
- ❖ Two General Plan program **newsletters** were prepared during the program. These newsletters provided the public updated information on the status of the General Plan program, upcoming workshop schedules, methods for public comment, and a summary of the proposed General Plan. Newsletters were distributed to all Los Altos residents.
- ❖ The City also utilized its **website** to provide current information on the General Plan program. Both newsletters were posted on the website.



- ❖ The public had the opportunity to address decision makers directly regarding issues, concerns, and desires at three joint **City Council/Planning Commission Workshops**. The first of these workshops was an introduction to the General Plan program and a review of the draft vision statement generated with input from the GPAC. The second joint workshop allowed decision-makers the opportunity to provide direction on the issues, goals and policies to be included in the Draft General Plan, as well as direction on the land use and circulation alternative to be used as the basis of the Draft General Plan. Once the preliminary Draft General Plan was completed, the third joint workshop was held to review that plan and incorporate City Council and Planning Commission comments into the Draft General Plan prior to public hearings.
- ❖ The Draft General Plan and Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration were circulated for public review and comment, before and during the **General Plan public hearings** held before the City Council and Planning Commission prior to adoption of the updated General Plan.



WAY TO THE FUTURE

The General Plan provides the way to achieve the future the community has identified for itself. Direction is established in the General Plan to take advantage of opportunities to achieve the community's goals for the future. The goals and policies in the elements and the Implementation Program provide guidance for dealing with changing conditions and specific actions to optimize community potential. The path established in the General Plan is an integrated union of the enduring historic values responsible for modern prosperity and innovative approaches to achieve the vision for the future.

CIRCULATION ELEMENT



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CIRCULATION ELEMENT



INTRODUCTION

Los Altos is currently served by a well-established circulation system. The City is located immediately adjacent to the regional facilities of Interstate 280 and SR 85 and is served by two subregional facilities: Foothill Expressway and El Camino Real (State Route 82). The City contains approximately 107 miles of public streets.

Access to U. S. Highway 101 to the north is provided through the City of Mountain View. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are concentrated on the major streets with some off-street paths to provide intra-City travel. Most local streets do not include sidewalks. Established bus transit service also provides travel opportunities for community residents and employees and provides links to Caltrain passenger rail and VTA light rail service. The closest major airport is located in San Jose approximately eight miles to the east.

The Circulation Element guides continued development of the circulation system to support planned growth. The anticipated development pattern, as identified in the Land Use Element, will increase the demand for local and regional roadways. However, "cut-through" traffic generated by regional growth is expected to have the greatest effect on circulation. This element establishes the circulation plan components and identifies improvements required to maintain service levels. The use of a variety of transportation modes such as transit, walking, and bicycling is promoted to reduce the demand for transportation system improvements and improve air quality. Neighborhood traffic management techniques are used to reduce or manage traffic volumes and speeds.

PURPOSE OF THE CIRCULATION ELEMENT

The purpose of the Circulation Element is to provide a safe, efficient and adequate circulation system for the City. State planning law requires that the Circulation Element consists of the general location for proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element plan. To meet this purpose, the Circulation Element addresses the circulation improvements needed to provide adequate capacity for future land uses. The Element establishes a hierarchy of transportation routes with a typical functional description for each roadway category.

California General Plan Guidelines recommend that the circulation policies and plans should:

- ❖ Coordinate the transportation and circulation system with planned land uses;
- ❖ Promote the efficient transport of goods and the safe and effective movement of all segments of the population;
- ❖ Make efficient use of existing transportation facilities; and
- ❖ Protect environmental quality and promote the wise and equitable use of economic and natural resources.

The Guidelines indicate that the Circulation Element should address all facets of circulation including streets and highways, transportation corridors, public transit, railroads, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and commercial, general and military airports. The Los Altos Circulation Element fulfills State requirements with a strategy to provide effective circulation facilities



fective circulation facilities supporting desired community development. Los Altos has the additional goal of protecting the quiet and safe character of its neighborhood streetscape.

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE CIRCULATION ELEMENT

The Circulation Element contains goals and policies to improve overall circulation in Los Altos. For vehicle transportation, a hierarchical roadway network is established with designated roadway types and functional descriptions. The roadway type is linked to anticipated traffic levels. Because local circulation is inextricably linked with the regional transportation demand, the Element focuses on active participation in the development and implementation of regional policies and programs to alleviate traffic congestion. Non-automobile transportation modes are also emphasized in this Element to reduce dependency on the automobile and thereby improve the environment and the quality of life.

The Circulation Element is comprised of four sections: 1) Introduction; 2) the Circulation Plan; 3) Issues, Goals and Policies; and 4) Implementation Programs Appendix. The Circulation Plan provides background information and explains how the goals and policies will be achieved and implemented. In the Issues, Goals and Policies section, major issues pertaining to the transportation system are identified, and related goals and policies are established. The goals are overall statements of the City desires and are comprised of broad statements of purpose and direction. The policies serve as guides for planning circulation improvements to accommodate anticipated population growth, maintaining acceptable levels of transportation service while development occurs, promoting alternative transportation modes, and coordinating with local and regional jurisdictions to provide regional transportation facilities. Specific implemen-

tation programs for circulation are contained in Implementation Program Appendix.

RELATED LAWS, PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Several transportation plans prepared by the state, County and regional agencies focus on the regional transportation system. Strategies to handle anticipated traffic levels from future development are discussed. Other plans have also been prepared to locate future routes for public transit including rail service. Plans and programs related to the Circulation Element include the following:

Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) is a regulatory body responsible for improving air quality in the Bay Area. The Bay Area 1991 Clean Air Plan (CAP) is required by the 1988 California Clean Air Act. Prepared by BAAQMD in cooperation with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), its main objective is to attain state air quality standards for ozone and carbon monoxide. The plan includes a specific measure which urges cities and counties to formulate and adopt local air quality elements, or the equivalent, in their General Plan.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a long-range planning document that proposes a detailed set of investments and strategies to maintain, manage and improve the surface transportation network in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The plan promotes projects that: a) provide reasonable and predictable mobility within the



region; b) ensure that all people have equitable access to transportation; c) support a healthy environment and mitigate any adverse impacts; and d) promote economic vitality within the region. A primary goal of the RTP is to illustrate how the improvements will help attain regional air quality objectives.

Santa Clara County Congestion Management Plan (CMP)

With the passage of the gas tax increase (Proposition 111) in June 1990, each county in the state was required to prepare a Congestion Management Plan (CMP). The main goals of the CMP are to establish a political process through which countywide roadway congestion can be controlled or relieved, and to develop a comprehensive strategy to respond to countywide transportation needs. The CMP is updated biennially to reflect changing transportation needs and conditions within the county. The CMP capital improvement program must be submitted to MTC every two years to be incorporated into the Bay Area Regional Transportation Improvement Plan. The Valley Transportation Authority, the regional planning agency for Santa Clara County, administers the CMP.

Valley Transportation Plan 2020

Beginning in January 1999, VTA began developing the long-range transportation plan called Valley Transportation Plan 2020 (VTP 2020). The purpose of VTP 2020 is to:

- ❖ Improve the relationship between land use and transportation decisions;
- ❖ Effectively distribute transportation resources and plans their future use, and effectively upgrades the existing State and local roadway system;
- ❖ Expand the rail and bus transit system, using new technologies for the bus fleet;

- ❖ Implement new technologies in operating and managing transportation systems; and,
- ❖ Respond to heightened awareness of the link between transportation and open space preservation, air quality, urban design and other environmental issues.

Adopted in December 2000, VTP 2020 provides a framework for making key transportation decisions, a plan for investing in our transportation system, and strategic direction for VTA's involvement in land use and other livability issues. The projects in this document are incorporated into the RTP prepared by MTC. Over the past year, efforts have focused on updating the expenditure plan, and development of new land use and partnership efforts.

Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Division

The Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Division is in the process of preparing a comprehensive study of all of the County expressway facilities including Foothill Expressway. Previous studies of Foothill Expressway over the last 20 years have called for the addition of HOV lanes from Loyola Drive north, and at-grade improvements at Homestead Avenue, Grant Avenue, Springer Road-Magdalena Avenue, and El Monte Avenue. The new County study will examine the engineering and design feasibility of these and other improvements within the corridor. Results of this study regarding Foothill Expressway are not expected until late 2002 or early 2003.

Los Altos Bicycle Transportation Plan

The City prepared a 2002 Bicycle Transportation Plan recommending a variety of improvements to complete and enhance bicycle and multi-use bicycle pedestrian paths.



RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

According to state planning law, the Circulation Element must be independent, but consistent with the other General Plan Elements. All elements of the General Plan are interrelated to a degree, and certain goals and policies of each element may also address issues that are the primary subjects of other elements. The integration of overlapping issues throughout the General Plan elements provides a strong basis for implementation of plans and programs, and achievement of community goals. The Circulation Element relates most closely to the Land Use, Conservation and Open Space, Noise, and Public Safety Elements.



The Land Use and Circulation Elements are inextricably linked. The planned development identified in the Land Use Element is the basis for determining future road improvements. The circulation policies and plans ensure that existing transportation facilities will be improved and new facilities will be constructed to adequately serve traffic generated by planned development. An efficient circulation system is a critical factor for diversifying and expanding local economic activities. In addition, the Circulation Element promotes alternative transportation modes to minimize the regional impacts of planned local development.

The Circulation Element provides for a bikeway and pedestrians system that accommodates bicycles and pedestrians. Bikeways will connect with recreational areas and support the City recreational goals identified in the Conservation and Open Space Element. In addition to promoting bicycle and pedestrian transportation, the Circulation Element promotes the use of public transit.



CIRCULATION PLAN

Los Altos is supported by a diverse circulation system including vehicular, transit, bicycle and pedestrian links. The local system interconnects with the larger regional system and the operation of the two systems is interdependent. The Circulation Plan summarizes the approach to ensure safe and convenient operation of the circulation system, and identifies improvements required to accommodate traffic from planned development and regional diversion.

Due to the City's lower density development, vehicular transportation remains the primary travel mode. To that end, a Roadway Plan is established with hierarchical designations. The use of non-automobile transportation modes is promoted to reduce the vehicle congestion and improve overall livability.

The Plan is based on goals and policies identified in the final section of this Element. The Circulation Element Implementation Programs Appendix is an extension of the Circulation Plan and contains specific programs to coordinate planned development and regional through traffic.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

The rapid growth in the San Francisco Bay Area over the last 20 years has resulted in an overwhelming demand on the region's transportation system. Congestion on the freeways surrounding and adjacent to Los Altos has caused some regional traffic to divert to local City streets. The success of development within the City is dependent on the effectiveness of the regional system to accommodate demand through all modes. The system must link localities with major activity centers and regional transportation hubs. In addition, the regional circulation

system must meet the needs of local residents.

Los Altos is closely tied to the regional circulation system. Regional roadway access to Los Altos is provided by three major freeways: State Route (SR) 85, SR 101, and Interstate 280 (I-280). Only I-280 provides direct access within Los Altos via an interchange at Foothill Expressway. Connections to I-280 are also provided via interchanges at El Monte Avenue and Magdalena Avenue. Access to SR 85 is provided by the I-280 interchange, Homestead Road, Fremont Avenue, and El Camino Real (SR 82). SR 85 is often congested northbound in the morning peak period and southbound in the evening peak period. Traffic moving between I-280 and points to the north will sometimes divert to City streets to avoid the congestion on SR 85. Foothill Expressway and El Camino Real also serve regional traffic and link Los Altos to nearby cities to the north and south.

Regional Travel Forecasts

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) prepared its Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2020 to identify the improvements needed to serve regional travel demand for the next 20 years. The report contains the following key findings, which are important considerations for Los Altos:

- ❖ The County's population is expected to increase by 15 percent over the next 20 years, while the job growth is expected to exceed 20 percent. With the addition of significantly more jobs than residents, growth in net commuting from surrounding counties will increase over the next decade and then level off.
- ❖ Approximately 41 percent of the job growth will occur in the northern part of the County in Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Cupertino, Santa Clara, North San Jose, and Milpitas. Commute travel to the jobs in the northwestern-most cities will impact travel through Los Altos.



- ❖ A four percent increase in freeway capacity will not be able to accommodate the projected demand. More than 20 percent of the morning peak trips in 2020 will not be able to travel during the peak hour due to congestion. Thus, congestion will further spread outside the traditional peak travel periods.
- ❖ The amount of vehicle miles of travel on arterial roadways is expected to increase from 26 percent in 2000 to 30 percent in 2020. At the same time, the investment in the transportation system will focus on system management instead of system expansion (i.e., managing traffic flow instead of widening roads).
- ❖ The proposed improvement plan is a multi-modal approach designed to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and to develop viable options to single-occupant vehicle travel including transit, bicycling and walking. The implementation of Best Development Practices to create and maintain livable and sustainable communities is another primary goal of the regional planning effort.

The results of this report indicate that Los Altos will continue to experience peak period congestion as commuters in automobiles search for alternative routes to regional freeways and expressways. Although improvements will increase throughput in some cases, diversion to City streets will still occur and is expected to worsen.

The VTA is the Congestion Management Agency (CMA) for jurisdictions within the County and sets the State and Federal funding priorities for improvements affecting Congestion Management Program (CMP) facilities.

CMP facilities in Los Altos include SR 82, Foothill Expressway, SR 85, and I-280. The following local streets include at-grade intersections on Foothill Expressway and are included in the Santa Clara County Congestion Management Program (CMP): Main Street, San Antonio Road, El Monte Avenue, Springer Road-Magdalen Avenue, Grant Road-St. Joseph Avenue, and Vineyard Drive-Homestead Road. The Arboretum Drive-Fremont Avenue intersection on Foothill Expressway is not a CMP location.

CMP-designated intersections have regional significance and are monitored annually by the Valley Transportation Authority, the congestion management agency for Santa Clara County. In addition to annual monitoring, VTA staff reviews transportation impact analysis reports from local agencies to evaluate the potential transportation impacts of local land use decisions. The LOS standard for CMP intersections is LOS E.

Transportation Demand Management Programs

Many communities in the County now require aggressive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs. These programs include various facilities and services designed to reduce the amount of peak period traffic by encouraging employees to use modes other than the single-occupant automobile for transportation to and from the workplace and to travel during non-peak times. Typical TDM components include:

- ❖ TDM coordinator
- ❖ Carpool/vanpool match program and preferential parking for carpools/vanpools
- ❖ Secure bicycle storage facilities
- ❖ On-site shower facilities



- ❖ Flex-time (i.e., staggered hours that begin and/or end outside the peak commute hours)
- ❖ Provisions for telecommuting
- ❖ Shuttle bus service
- ❖ Guaranteed ride home program
- ❖ Cash incentives/Transit subsidies/On-site transit pass sales
- ❖ Education programs

The City does not have adopted policies or implementation programs regarding specific TDM measures. Recent court decisions have restricted the methods by which jurisdictions can require TDM measures for developments. Typically, TDM measures are included as part of a project through the development agreement process for new projects or through approval of use permit modifications for existing developments. The City will continue to support application of TDM measures for regional and local developments.

CITY ROADWAYS

Since more than 94 percent of peak period travel is completed using automobiles, the City roadway system is the most important component of the City's overall circulation system and is defined using a hierarchical classification system for major streets. The Circulation Element roadway categories are differentiated by size, function and capacity.

Roadway Categories

The Element includes six categories in the hierarchy, ranging from freeways with the highest capacity, to a two-lane undivided roadway with the lowest capacity. Only the facilities designated as arterial, collector, local collector, and local street are under the jurisdiction of the City. Caltrans maintains

and has jurisdiction over all freeways and state routes, while the Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Division controls all intersections along Foothill Expressway. The roadway categories are summarized as follows:

Freeways. Freeways are limited-access, high-speed travelways included in the state and federal highway systems. Their purpose is to carry regional through traffic. Access is provided by interchanges with typical spacing of one-mile or greater. No local access is provided to adjacent land uses. The only freeway with an access point in the City is I-280.

Expressways. Expressways are high-speed, limited-access streets designed to facilitate the movement of high traffic volumes. Expressways are designed to serve both regional through and local traffic, and ideally connect other regional roadways and freeways. The only expressway facility within the City limits is Foothill Expressway.

Arterials. Arterial roadways are major streets that primarily serve through traffic and provide access to abutting properties as a secondary function. Arterials are generally designed with two to six travel lanes and major intersections are signalized. This roadway type is divided into two categories: major and minor arterials. Major arterials are typically four- or more lane roadways and serve both local and through traffic. Minor arterials are typically two- to four-lane streets and serve local and commute traffic (e.g., major arterial is El Camino Real). Minor arterials include San Antonio Road and El Monte Avenue (between I-280 and Foothill Expressway). Other facilities such as Grant Road and El Monte Avenue, between Springer Road and Foothill Expressway are currently designated as collector streets, but function as minor arterials in terms of traffic volume and traffic composition. That is, they carry a substantial amount of regional or non-local traffic.



Collectors. Collectors are streets that provide access and traffic circulation within residential and non-residential (e.g., commercial and industrial) areas. They connect local streets to arterials and are typically designed with two travel lanes that may accommodate on-street parking. In some cases, they will provide access to abutting properties.

Local Collector. A local collector is a street that distributes traffic within a neighborhood or similar adjacent neighborhoods, but is not intended for use as a through street or link between higher capacity facilities such as collector or arterial roadways. Local collectors are fronted by residential uses and do not typically serve commercial uses.

Local Streets. Local streets provide direct access to abutting residential properties as their primary function. Local streets have no more than two travel lanes and may or may not accommodate on-street parking. In most areas of Los Altos, local streets do not include sidewalks.

The city does not maintain standard cross-sections for arterial roadways. Arterial roadways are designed on an as-needed basis. Any of the roadway classifications may deviate from typical standards where physical constraints exist or where preservation of community character dictates special treatment. Although specific roadway design may vary, the overriding objective is that all roadways carry the designed volume of traffic at a safe travel speed. The classification of streets has a bearing on the types of traffic calming measures that are considered appropriate for specific roadway segments.

Performance Criteria

The performance of the roadway system is determined by comparing its traffic carrying capacity with projected traffic volumes. The

use of performance criteria relies upon a statement of City policy establishing a desired level of service (LOS) within the community. Performance is measured based on intersection delay in accordance with City policies consistent with regional land use and planning guidelines maintained by the VTA. Delays are calculated based on existing and future traffic volumes and the capacity of the traffic control device (traffic signal or stop sign) at each location. A level of service scale is used to evaluate performance based on corresponding ranges of delay. The operations of roadways are described with the term level of service. Level of service (LOS) is a qualitative description of traffic operations ranging from Level A, or free flow operations with little or no delay, to Level F, or oversaturated conditions with excessive delays. LOS E represents conditions at capacity.

The level of service methodology for signalized intersections evaluates an intersection's operation based on the average stopped vehicular delay calculated using the method described in Chapter 9 of the 1985 Highway Capacity Manual with adjusted saturation flow rates to reflect local (Santa Clara County) conditions. The average stopped delay for all vehicles at signalized intersections is calculated using the TRAFFIX analysis software. This method is consistent with City guidelines and those published by the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), which monitors land use changes throughout the County. The ranges of stopped delay and the corresponding LOS for signalized intersections are presented in Table C-1.

Level of service calculations for stop sign-controlled intersections were conducted using the methodology for unsignalized intersections contained in the 2000 update to the Highway Capacity Manual. This method calculates the amount of control delay at an intersection, which includes initial deceleration delay, queue move-up time, stopped delay, and final acceleration delay.



Delay for two-way (stop signs on the minor street only) and four-way (all approaches stop) are calculated differently. The level of service rating for two-way stop controlled intersections is based on the average control delay for the longest-delayed approach controlled by a stop sign. The level of service is calculated for each movement, not for the intersection as a whole; since the traffic on the main or major street does not stop, including these volumes would skew the weighted vehicular delay. For minor street approaches composed of a single lane (shared approach), the control delay is computed as the average of all movements in that lane.

At four-way stop intersections, the delay used to identify the LOS is the average of all turning movements (including through movements) on all four approaches. The ranges of control delay and the corresponding LOS for unsignalized intersections are presented in Table C-2.

Various LOS policy standards have been established for evaluating observed traffic, future development plans and circulation system modifications. At the regional planning level, the Caltrans- and County-controlled facilities are monitored as part of the Congestion Management Program (CMP) and use a minimum LOS E operating standard. For the Los Altos General Plan, the performance criterion for evaluating operations at City-controlled intersections is LOS D.

Roadway segments operations can be analyzed based on generalized volume thresholds of 18,000, 36,000, and 54,000 vehicles per day (vpd) for two-, four-, and six-lane roadways, respectively. These planning-level thresholds are usually applied to arterial streets with intermittent driveways serving abutting properties and speed limits of 35 to 45 miles per hour. These thresholds are not the maximum volumes that can be

accommodated by the roadway, but a planning “capacity” for purposes of identifying congested areas. Planning-level thresholds for local and collector streets can vary widely depending on the number of abutting properties/driveways and the overall character of the street.

Daily traffic volumes are typically used to identify the required number of travel lanes on roadway segments; however, intersections represent the constraint points of the roadway system. Thus, intersection peak-hour volumes are a better indicator of roadway operations, especially in Los Altos, where widening of roadway segments to accommodate existing and future volumes is limited by right-of-way and other physical constraints, in addition to City Council policies.

Roadway Plan

The plan accommodates anticipated traffic levels where possible and the hierarchical roadway classification system is implemented to avoid community impacts. The Circulation Plan delineates the planned roadway system (Figure C-1).

Monitoring the operation of City roadways will be conducted to determine if the City roadway system meets desirable performance criteria. Where the City determines that proposed development projects will cause LOS standards to be exceeded, appropriate mitigation will be considered. Locations that are currently congested or expected to be congested in the future are illustrated on Figure C-2.



**Table C-1
Signalized Intersection Level of Service Definitions
Using Average Stopped Vehicular Delay**

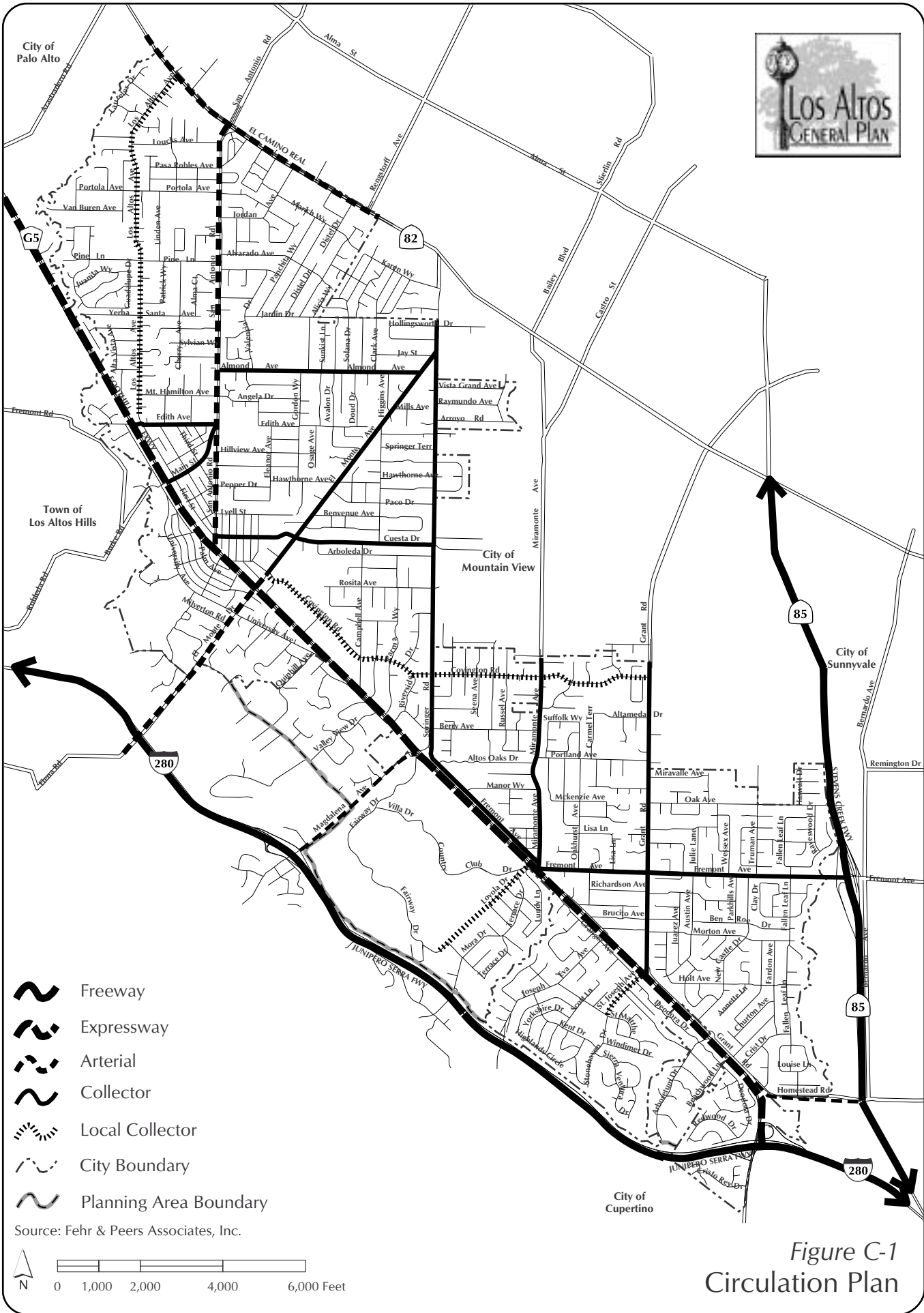
<i>Level of Service</i>	Average Stopped Delay	<i>Description</i>
A	≤ 5.0	Operations with very low delay occurring with favorable progression and/or short cycle length.
B+	$5.0 < \text{delay} \leq 7.0$	Operations with low delay occurring with good progression and/or short cycle lengths.
B	$7.0 < \text{delay} \leq 13.0$	
B-	$13.0 < \text{delay} \leq 15.0$	
C+	$15.0 < \text{delay} \leq 17.0$	Operations with average delays resulting from fair progression and/or longer cycle lengths. Individual cycle failures begin to appear.
C	$17.0 < \text{delay} \leq 23.0$	
C-	$23.0 < \text{delay} \leq 25.0$	
D+	$25.0 < \text{delay} \leq 28.0$	Operations with longer delays due to a combination of unfavorable progression, long cycle lengths, and high V/C ratios. Many vehicles stop and individual cycle failures are noticeable.
D	$28.0 < \text{delay} \leq 37.0$	
D-	$37.0 < \text{delay} \leq 40.0$	
E+	$40.0 < \text{delay} \leq 44.0$	Operations with high delay values indicating poor progression, long cycle lengths, and high V/C ratios. Individual cycle failures are frequent occurrences.
E	$44.0 < \text{delay} \leq 56.0$	
E-	$56.0 < \text{delay} \leq 60.0$	
F	> 60.0	Operations with delays unacceptable to most drivers occurring due to over-saturation, poor progression, or very long cycle lengths.

Source: *Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines* (VTA Congestion Management Program Guidelines, May 7, 1998)

**Table C-2
Unsignalized Intersection Level of Service Definitions
Using Total Average Delay**

<i>Level of Service</i>	Description	Average Total Delay Per Vehicle (Seconds)
A	Little or no delays.	≤ 10.0
B	Short traffic delays.	10.1 to 15.0
C	Average traffic delays.	15.1 to 25.0
D	Long traffic delays.	25.1 to 35.0
E	Very long traffic delays	35.1 to 50.0
F	Extreme traffic delays with intersection capacity exceeded.	> 50.0

Source: Transportation Research Board *Highway Capacity Manual, Special Report, 1997.*



Source: Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc.

Figure C-1
Circulation Plan

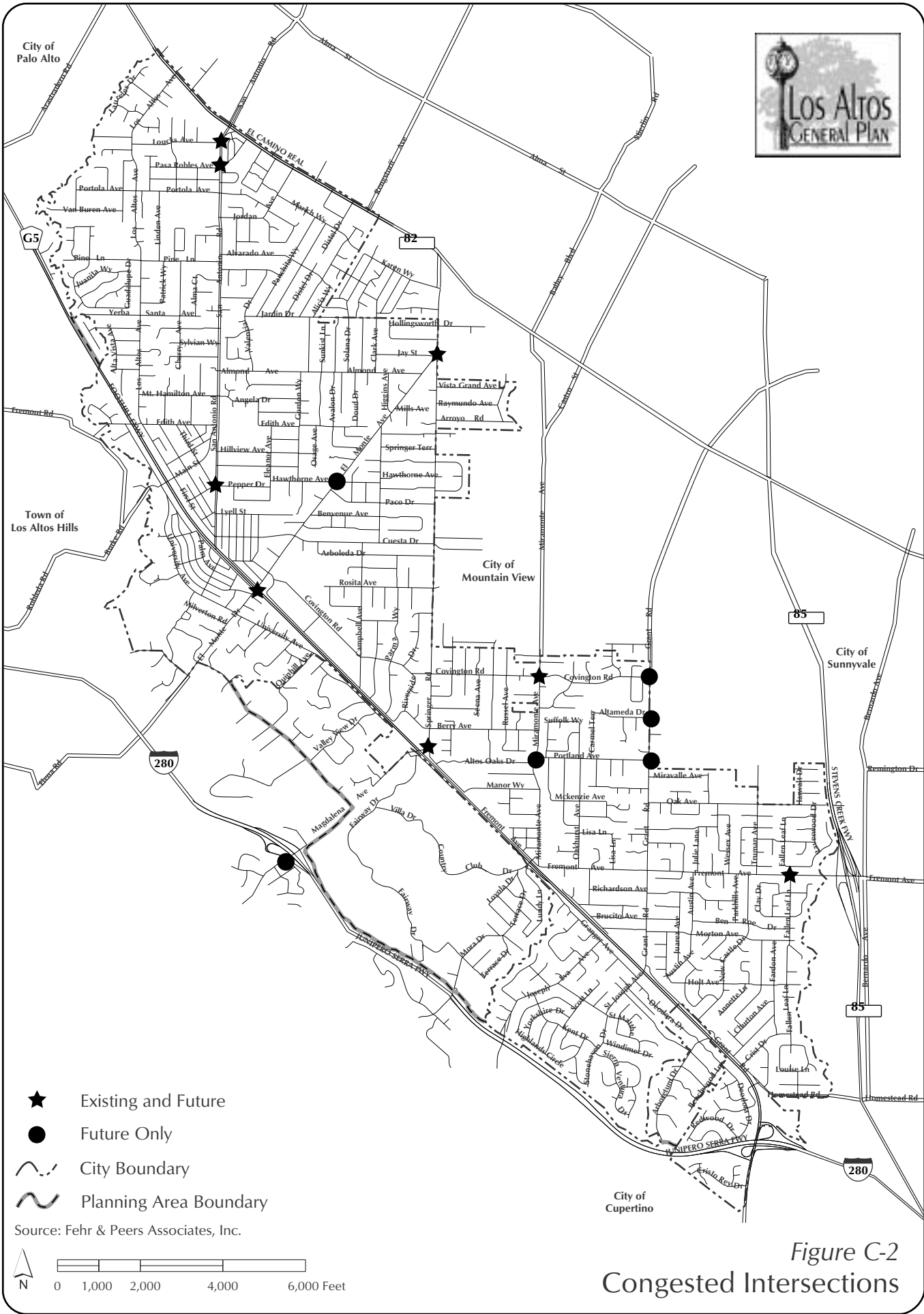


Figure C-2
Congested Intersections



The circulation goals and policies emphasize the need for a circulation system capable of serving both existing and future traffic demand. Maintaining community values and aesthetic character must be balanced with expanding the circulation system. The location, design, and modes of the circulation system have major impacts on air quality, noise, community appearance and other environmental resources. In some cases, congested operations will be accepted in lieu of adding roadway capacity, which could have significant right-of-way and environmental impacts, and could encourage additional regional traffic diversion.



Neighborhood Traffic Management

The City has established a comprehensive neighborhood traffic management program (NTMP) in November 1999 that specifies a process for implementing traffic calming measures designed to reduce or manage volumes and travel speeds on local streets, as well as a process for residents to petition the City for improvements. Traffic calming measures include changes in street alignment, street width reductions, installation of barriers or other physical devices, and enforcement to reduce traffic speeds and/or cut-through volumes, in the interest of street safety, livability, and other public purposes. As congestion increases, the potential for diversion of traffic to local streets increases.

The City will continue to take a proactive approach to maintaining traffic flows on the appropriate roadways. However, the NTMP will be required to address citizen complaints and provide a way to enhance neighborhoods and improve the residential quality of life in the City.

The NTMP may need to be periodically updated based on new or modified traffic calming measures and how they are implemented. In addition, the City will consider adopting a traffic impact fee to support NTMP traffic calming measures.

TRANSIT

One of the key components of the Circulation Plan is the promotion of alternative transportation modes such as transit, bicycling, and walking. Increasing the use of non-automobile transportation modes also produces a number of community benefits including reduced traffic, less need for costly roadway improvement projects, and improved air quality.

Bus Service

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) operates bus, light rail transit, and paratransit service throughout Santa Clara County. Bus transit service within the City of Los Altos includes six fixed routes (Routes 22, 23, 34, 51, 52, and 300) as shown on Figure C-3, and paratransit service (dial-a-ride service for qualified individuals). Paratransit service is operated under contract with OUTREACH, a private, non-profit paratransit broker. This door-to-door service is provided within the County to riders who meet eligibility requirements established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

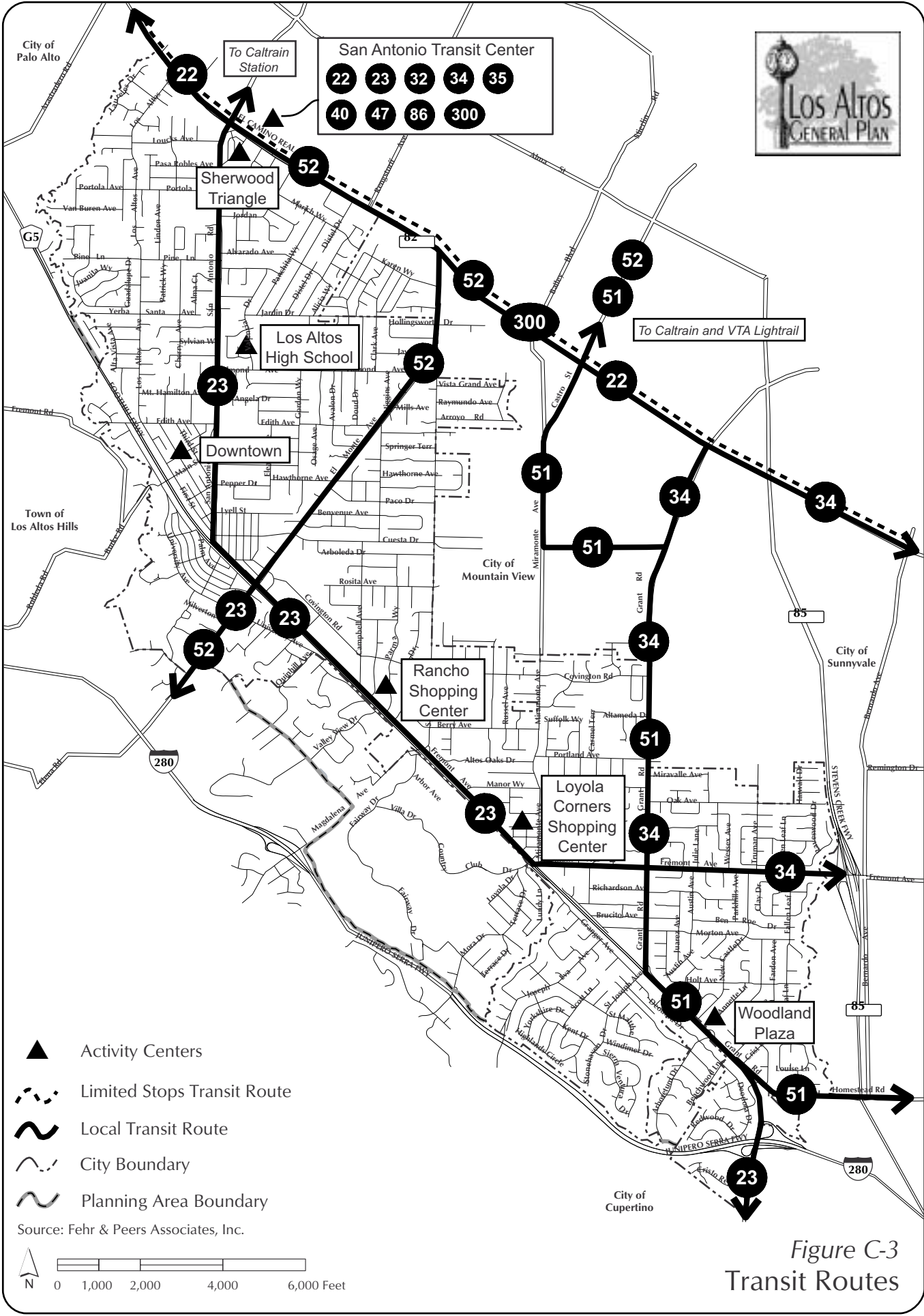


Figure C-3
Transit Routes



Bus routes in the City only provide service on Grant Road, Foothill Expressway, El Monte Avenue, San Antonio Road, El Camino Real, Fremont Avenue, and very short sections of Springer Road and Miramonte Avenue. Most transit routes are oriented in a north-south direction and are spaced from one-half to one mile apart. This layout makes it difficult for residents to utilize the bus routes effectively.

To increase bus ridership, transit facilities will need to be enhanced and provided as part of new development or redevelopment projects. More importantly, service frequency will need to be increased and travel times to regional destinations will have to decrease over current conditions. The City will work with the VTA to maximize ridership and improve regional and intra-city travel opportunities.

Rail Service

VTA light rail service can be accessed at the Downtown Mountain View Transit Center and provides links to employment centers in Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, North San Jose, and Milpitas. Service is provided at 10-minute headways during peak periods and light rail vehicles operate 24 hours a day.

Caltrain provides heavy rail passenger service between Gilroy in Santa Clara County, through San Mateo County, to San Francisco. Service is maintained and operated by the Joint Powers Board. The closest Caltrain stations to Los Altos are located on Central Expressway near San Antonio Road and also near Castro Street at the Downtown Mountain View Transit Center. The San Antonio station can be accessed by VTA bus service via Route 23 and a short walk, while VTA access to the Castro Street stop is provided directly via Routes 34 and 52, plus Route 51 and a short walk. Improved bus service or shuttle service from Los Altos to all nearby rail stations will be required to enhance rail travel as an option for City residents and employees.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel

The City of Los Altos has a number of existing and planned bikeways designated as paths, lanes, and routes. Descriptions of these classifications are presented below:

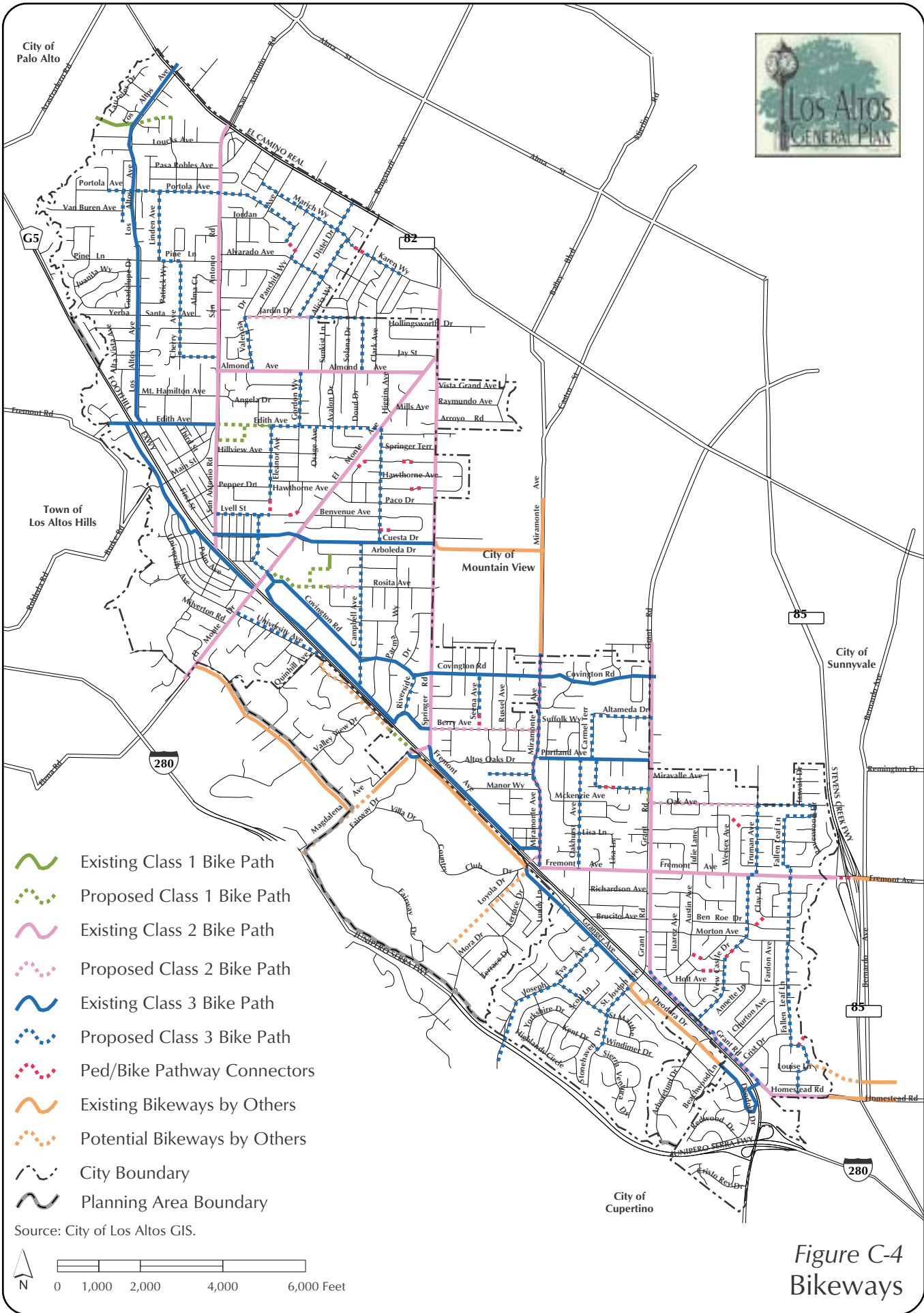
Bike Paths. Bike paths are paved facilities designated for bicycle use that are physically separated from roadways by space or a physical barrier, and are referred to as Class I bike paths.

Bike Lanes. Bike lanes are lanes on the outside edge of roadways reserved for the exclusive use of bicycles, and designated with special signing and pavement markings. Bike lanes are referred to as Class II bike facilities.

Bike Routes. Bike routes are roadways recommended for bicycle use and often connect to bike lanes and bike paths. Routes are designated with signs only and may not include additional pavement width. Bike routes are referred to as Class III facilities.

Enhancement of the bikeway system will continue as roadway improvements occur and planned projects are implemented through the CIP. Bikeway projects will focus on closing gaps in the existing system, making City facilities continuous with the regional system and eliminating parking in marked bicycle lanes except where permitted at certain times of day because of adjacent residential uses.

The City has prepared a 2002 Los Altos Bicycle Transportation Plan (BTP), which evaluates the City's existing bikeways and support services and recommends a variety of improvements to complete and enhance bicycle and multi-use bicycle/pedestrian paths. The City should ensure implementation of the proposed bicycle system through the recommended funding programs and the CIP consistent with the City's current adopted Bicycle Transportation Plan.



- Existing Class 1 Bike Path
- Proposed Class 1 Bike Path
- Existing Class 2 Bike Path
- Proposed Class 2 Bike Path
- Existing Class 3 Bike Path
- Proposed Class 3 Bike Path
- Ped/Bike Pathway Connectors
- Existing Bikeways by Others
- Potential Bikeways by Others
- City Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary

Source: City of Los Altos GIS.

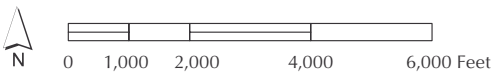


Figure C-4
Bikeways



Pedestrian facilities improve safety for pedestrians and can also encourage the use of other non-automobile modes of transportation. These facilities include sidewalks, paths, trails, pedestrian bridges, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals with crosswalks at signalized intersections to accommodate pedestrian circulation. For all key arterial and collector roadway segments, pedestrian path and bicycle lane enhancements should be included as part of regular maintenance (e.g., overlays) and new street upgrade projects (e.g., drainage modifications).

Where feasible, paths, trails and sidewalks and raised curbs should be added to provide a better physical separation between vehicles and pedestrians. Landscaping should be adequately maintained to provide clear pedestrian paths. All of these improvements will enhance flow and improve safety for all modes.

As shown in Figure C-5 segments requiring gap closures or better definition on at least one side of the street include Springer Road (between Cuesta Drive and El Monte Avenue), Grant Road (between Fremont Avenue and Covington Road), and Fremont Avenue (between Grant Road and the eastern City limit). These gaps should be closed to improve pedestrian travel and safety. Enhanced pedestrian access will provide an attractive alternative to automobile travel and will improve access to available transit facilities and services. Although some sidewalks and paths are well used by people walking for pleasure and exercise, an important objective for Los Altos is to make walking a preferred mode for non-recreational trips to the store, the workplace, and schools.

Enhancing bicycle and pedestrian travel within neighborhoods is a key issue for the safe travel of Los Altos school students. Although school districts have the most direct contact with parents and students, the City of Los Altos should work with each district to ensure that students are provided with as much information as possible re-

garding safe travel to and from school. Thus, the City should work with each district to expand the current education efforts and prepare Suggested Route to School maps for each campus serving students residing in Los Altos. Other items such as a Guidelines for Safe Walking and Bicycling handbook can be distributed as part of the education process. Each of these items is described briefly below.

Each District should continue its education programs and should encourage students to walk and bicycle to school as appropriate. The City should continue to pursue opportunities to enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities, especially in the vicinity of schools, through appropriate grants. The City was recently successful in obtaining a federal grant to establish a Safe Routes to School program for Loyola School on Berry Avenue. This grant will help to fund physical improvements to enhance pedestrian and bicycle routes and facilities, which will help delineate the appropriate routes for students to travel to and from the school.

PARKING

Parking is typically considered a separate issue from overall circulation. However, the presence of on-street parking has a direct effect on roadway capacity. In addition, off-street parking deficiencies can cause vehicles to re-circulate on public streets, which also increases traffic volumes and congestion by reducing capacity for through traffic.

The Los Altos zoning ordinance includes parking requirements to ensure that adequate numbers of spaces are provided on-site for most uses, as well as minimum stall dimensions that are consistent with current standards for other jurisdictions. These regulations apply to all new developments and may be applied to existing uses that are modified or expanded.

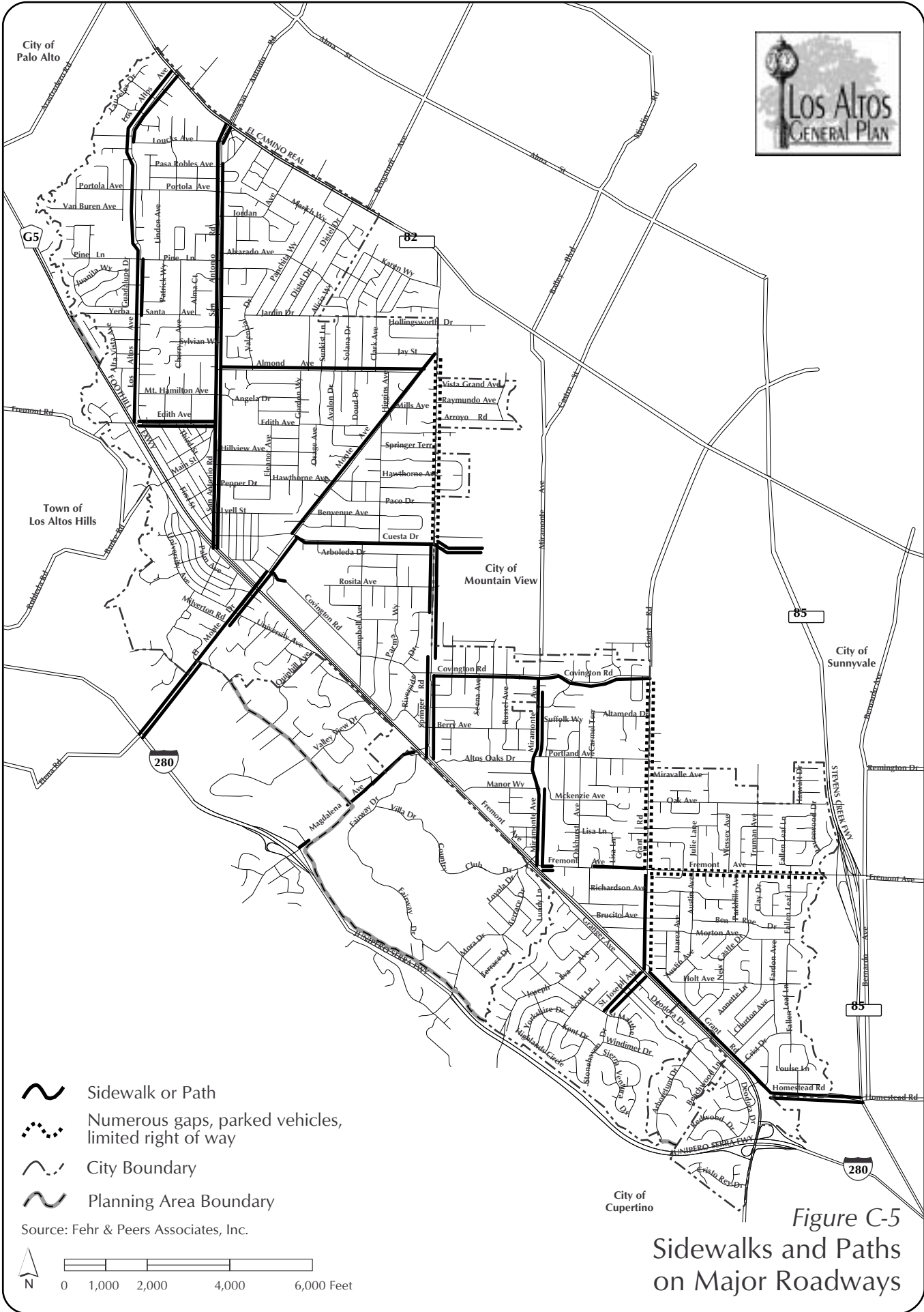


Figure C-5
Sidewalks and Paths
on Major Roadways



In commercial areas like the Downtown, adequate parking supplies will be provided to minimize intrusion into adjacent neighborhoods. However, facilities for non-automobile travel should be enhanced to encourage residents to walk, bicycle or take transit to nearby commercial establishments.

For residential areas, the City applies a roadway shoulder-paving standard for parallel parking areas adjacent to streets.



TRUCK TRAFFIC

Even with increased through traffic on City streets, the number of trucks without a destination or origin in the City traffic is not expected to increase substantially. Additional development within Los Altos is expected to be limited given the fact that the City is mostly built out. Low volumes of truck traffic will be generated by the construction of new single-family homes or the limited redevelopment of other areas. This traffic is expected to have a negligible effect on overall Citywide circulation.

Given their connectivity between communities, the State Highway segments of SR 85, I-280, and U.S. Highway 101, and State Route 82 are considered to be primary truck routes. Designated truck routes through the City include Foothill Expressway, San Antonio Road (for vehicles making deliveries only within city limits) and El Monte Avenue between Foothill Expressway and I-280. No additional truck routes are required to serve the City's needs. Trucks making local deliveries should proceed by the shortest route to the nearest truck route for travel.



ISSUES, GOALS AND POLICIES

Los Altos has a local circulation system that includes vehicular, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian components. An interdependent system is created by the connection of this local system with a larger regional circulation system. A safe and convenient circulation system operation is needed to support planned land use in the community and manage through traffic that originates in and is destined for locations outside the City.

Five major issues are addressed by the goals, policies and plan of the Circulation Element. These major issues are:

- 1) supporting regional transportation facilities;
- 2) improving City roadways and traffic safety;
- 3) encouraging public transit;
- 4) improving bicycle and pedestrian travel; and
- 5) managing parking and truck traffic.

Each issue and the related goals and policies are included in this section of the Element.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Transportation in Los Altos is directly related to an overall transportation network for the southern Bay Area. Roadway facilities within Los Altos accommodate regional traffic resulting from congestion on State Route 85, Interstate 280, Foothill Expressway and

U.S. Highway 101. Planning for the needs of the community necessarily includes recognition of the related transportation needs and planning efforts of the surrounding communities, County and region. With that recognition is the need for the City to actively monitor transportation planning in the surrounding area and strongly encourage regional transportation improvements.

Goal 1: Support development of an efficient regional transportation system

Policy 1.1: Promote improvement and maintenance of all regional highways, expressways, and freeways in the area, consistent with other circulation policies.

Policy 1.2: Discourage regional and subregional traffic from passing through the community.

Policy 1.3: Cooperate with regional agencies to promote area-wide transportation solutions, and actively participate in area-wide planning studies and commissions.

Policy 1.4: Support the completion of the countywide commuter lane network where necessary and where it can be completed in a manner that retains the character of the community and shall encourage rideshare programs.

Policy 1.5: Cooperate with adjacent communities to maintain adequate service levels at shared intersections.



LOCAL CIRCULATION SYSTEM

A well-designed local roadway system is needed to provide safe and convenient access to activities in Los Altos. The local roadway system serves the community's primary need for mobility and includes a hierarchy of City streets to meet that need.

Certain local roadways, such as San Antonio Road, El Monte Avenue, Springer Road, Grant Road and Fremont Avenue accommodate regional traffic traveling through the community. During periods of heavy congestion, other local roadways are also affected by regional traffic.

The City has a strong desire to improve traffic safety within residential neighborhoods. Because of substantial amount of traffic on certain streets is through traffic, these vehicles travel at higher speeds, creating a safety problem for local residents. Traffic management or "traffic calming" techniques may be necessary to reduce the attractiveness of these streets with front-on housing to through traffic. A number of residential neighborhoods also need additional improvements to their local streets to provide safe vehicular and non-vehicular movement.

Goal 2: Provide for convenient and safe vehicular travel throughout Los Altos.

City Streets

Policy 2.1: Maintain a system of major streets bounding, but not penetrating residential areas, supplemented by a system of accessible regional rapid transit, highways, expressways and freeways.

Policy 2.2: Make the most use of existing major streets and roads, minimize the need for additional right-of-way and street widening.

Policy 2.3: Oppose significant widening of arterial and major collector streets within Los Altos.

Policy 2.4: Require development projects to mitigate their respective traffic and parking impacts by implementing practical and feasible street improvements.

Policy 2.5: Ensure that new development or redevelopment projects provide adequate property dedication to accommodate future roadway improvements at key intersections and other problem areas.

Policy 2.6: Implement and require developers to implement street improvements that accommodate and encourage the use of non-automobile travel modes including walking, bicycling, and transit.

Policy 2.7: Cooperate with adjacent jurisdictions to provide appropriate roadway transitions and street design.

Policy 2.8: Cooperate with adjacent communities to maintain adequate service levels at shared intersections.

Policy 2.9: Discourage traffic from using local streets to bypass congested intersections.

Policy 2.10: Investigate solutions to improve circulation in the Loyola Corners and Sherwood Gateway areas as outlined in their respective Specific Plans.



Neighborhood Issues

Policy 2.11: Achieve traffic volumes and speeds on collector and local streets that are compatible with the character of the adjacent land uses, the function of the street, and bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

Policy 2.12: Provide adequate maintenance of local streets and roadways.

Policy 2.13: Ensure that where appropriate Los Altos residential streets maintain their pleasant, semi-rural appearance.

Policy 2.14: Achieve residential street travel widths consistent with safe residential use of streets and with maintaining neighborhood character.

Policy 2.15: Discourage construction of private streets.

Policy 2.16: Implement the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program and related traffic calming measures to reduce the speed and volume of traffic on local streets within the community, especially in residential areas and adjacent to schools.

Safety

Policy 2.17: Maintain adequate emergency access for all land uses.

Policy 2.18: Investigate solutions for intersections and roadway segments with high accident rates.

Policy 2.19: Narrow street segments and intersection approaches at appropriate locations to improve pedestrian safety and reduce travel speeds.

Policy 2.20: Enhance driving safety in the community.

Policy 2.21: Continue to work with the police department to promote compliance with traffic laws to improve the safety of the local roadway system.

TRANSIT

To maximize use of the existing facilities and services, there is a need to increase the availability and use of public transit and non-vehicular methods of travel. Although commute travel by bus is sometimes made difficult by longer travel times, access to Caltrain and VTA light rail service in nearby Mountain View provides additional opportunities for Los Altos residents. This option to the traditional use of an automobile for traveling within and outside the community represents an important way of controlling congestion.

Goal 3: Promote local and regional transit as a viable alternative to automobile travel for all residents and especially for transit-dependent individuals.

Policy 3.1: Promote expansion of regional public transportation service and usage to provide alternative means of transportation and help reduce air pollution generated by automobiles.

Policy 3.2: Coordinate with the Valley Transportation Authority to increase bus service range and frequency within the City as appropriate.



Policy 3.3: Promote convenient and direct service to regional transit connections (BART, Cal-Train, VTA Light Rail, etc.), to airports, and to activity centers.

Policy 3.4: Encourage the use of smaller buses to minimize environmental impacts on residential areas.

Policy 3.5: Encourage public transportation carriers to make every feasible effort to reduce noise emissions, including, but not limited to, consideration of noise when purchasing equipment and when routing and scheduling operations.

Policy 3.6: Encourage the public school districts, private schools, and other operators to develop a local bus system and to expand ride-sharing activities that will help to reduce school-generated vehicle traffic in neighborhoods and on City streets. Bussing should be the first measure considered to reduce school-generated traffic before substantial roadway capacity enhancements are implemented in the vicinity of school sites.

Policy 3.7: Investigate the feasibility of a local shuttle service within the City to reduce local traffic volumes and overall parking demand.

Policy 3.8: Encourage the early conversion to zero emissions vehicular systems by public transit providers.

Policy 3.9: Work with public transit provider to ensure that the equipment and facilities meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Policy 3.10: Encourage construction of safe, clean, and attractive transit stops which include seating.

BICYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

Non-vehicular methods or modes of travel, such as bicycling or walking, can also reduce demands on the roadway system where necessary improvements exist to promote those methods. The existing system, although extensive, needs gap closures and additional facilities to provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle travel as described in the City's 2002 Bicycle Transportation Plan. Together, public transit and non-vehicular modes can provide viable alternatives to travel by automobile.

Goal 4: Provide for the convenient and safe movement of bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the City to meet the commuter and recreation needs of the community.

Policy 4.1: Develop and maintain a comprehensive and integrated system of bikeways that promote bicycle riding for commuting and recreation.

Policy 4.2: Provide for safe and convenient pedestrian connections to and between Downtown, other commercial districts, neighborhoods and major activity centers within the City, as well as with surrounding jurisdictions.



- Policy 4.3:** Work with the school districts and community organizations to create a Safe Routes to School program to help ensure students are able to safely walk and bicycle to and from school.
- Policy 4.4:** Provide trails, sidewalks or separated pathways in areas where needed to provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access to schools.
- Policy 4.5:** Consider separated bicycle and pedestrian pathways along arterial and collector roadways.
- Policy 4.6:** Pursue potential rights-of-way such as Santa Clara Valley Water District and other utility easements for bicycle and pedestrian trail development.
- Policy 4.7:** Establish priorities for bicycle and pedestrian improvements commensurate with the volume of vehicular traffic and include those priorities when funding transportation-related projects.
- Policy 4.8:** Work with neighboring cities and other jurisdictions to provide safe and adequate pedestrian and bicyclist crossings along major roadways to minimize impediments caused by vehicular traffic, especially along major roadways such as El Camino Real, Foothill Expressway, and San Antonio Road.

- Policy 4.9:** Work with residents to identify appropriate locations, especially adjacent to school sites, for the installation of pedestrian walkways that blend into the existing character of the community.

PARKING AND TRUCK TRAFFIC

Other components of the overall circulation system includes vehicular travel include parking and truck traffic. From both a traffic flow and aesthetic standpoint the provision of adequate parking is important for all uses. Re-circulating vehicles searching for parking in commercial areas is inefficient and reduces capacity. Although truck traffic is generally considered manageable in Los Altos, code enforcement should be maintained to ensure that regional traffic diverted to City streets does not include trucks.

Goal 5: Provide the appropriate amount of parking in residential neighborhoods and commercial areas to accommodate needs but not to encourage the use of automobile travel.

Residential Neighborhoods

- Policy 5.1:** Continue to encourage off-street parking in residential areas.
- Policy 5.2:** Enforce regulations prohibiting parking of commercial, recreation, and inoperable vehicles.
- Policy 5.3:** Reduce the amount of on-street parking in single-family residential neighborhoods caused by adjacent non-residential and multi-family residential uses.



Commercial Areas

Policy 5.4: Reduce the need for long-term and employee parking in the Downtown core area through creative programs designed to reduce employee dependence on automotive commuting and need for parking.

Policy 5.5: Establish methods for providing for existing and future parking demands in the Downtown and other commercial areas in an economically feasible and aesthetically-pleasing manner.

Policy 5.6: Target parking that is close to destinations for short-term (customer) use and target outlying parking (edge of Downtown, but not in neighboring residential areas) for long-term (owner and employee) parking.

Goal 6: Limit the intrusion of commercial truck traffic on streets within the City.

Policy 6.1: Require trucks to only use Foothill Expressway, San Antonio Road (a limited truck route for deliveries within City limits), and El Monte Avenue between Foothill Expressway and I-280.

Policy 6.2: Encourage deliveries to be made during off-peak times (i.e., outside the morning and evening commute periods), especially in areas where intersections operate at unacceptable levels.





IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS APPENDIX

and whenever the City's General Plan is amended or updated to ensure continued consistency and usefulness.

The Implementation Programs Appendix provides a guide to implement adopted General Plan policies and plans for City elected officials, staff and the public. The purpose of the Implementation Programs are to ensure the overall direction provided in the General Plan for City growth and development is translated from general terms to specific actions.

Each implementation program is a measure, procedure, or technique that requires additional City action. This action may either occur on a City-wide basis or in specific areas within the City. The City Council, by relating the Implementation Programs to the General Plan, recognizes the importance of long-range planning considerations in day-to-day decision making and budgeting. Implementation of the specific programs will be subject to funding constraints.

Use of the General Plan Implementation Program

The Implementation Programs are intended for use in preparing the Annual Report to the City Council on the status of the City's progress in implementing the General Plan, as described in Section 65400 of the California Government Code. Because some of the individual actions and programs described in the Implementation Programs Appendix act as mitigation for significant environmental impacts resulting from planned development identified in the General Plan, the annual report can also provide a means of monitoring the application of the mitigation measures as required by Section 15097 of the State CEQA Guidelines. This Implementation Programs Appendix may be updated annually with the budget process



CIRCULATION

This Implementation Program provides actions to implement the adopted policies and plans identified in the Circulation Element. The Circulation Implementation Program is a series of actions, procedures and techniques, which includes a description of the responsible agency/department, funding source, time frame and related policies in the Circulation Element.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

C 1: INTERJURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

Coordinate planned development in the planning area with needed improvements to the regional circulation system by:

- 1) Supporting improvement of all regional highways, expressways, and freeways in the area; and
- 2) Coordinating with Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority regarding the planned roadway network improvements and transit services.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4

LOCAL CIRCULATION SYSTEM

C 2: CIRCULATION PLAN

Adopt the Circulation Plan as a part of the City's General Plan, consisting of Figure C-2 and accompanying text describing street classifications.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	2002 and Ongoing
Related Policies:	2.1, 2.7, 2.11, 2.12

C 3: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)

Continue to use the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process to program and implement needed improvements to the street system.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	2.4, 2.7, 2.15, 2.16



C.4: REDEVELOPMENT OF STREETS

Develop a program for the replacement of streets.

Responsible Agency/Department	Public Works
Funding Source:	Assessment district, new dedicated tax or grants
Time Frame:	2004
Related Policies:	2.1

C 5: NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Continue to implement the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program to reduce vehicle speeds where appropriate and control traffic volumes on local streets.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund, Assessment fees, Grants
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	2.9, 2.11, 2.12, 2.17, 2.19, 2.20, 2.21, 2.22

C 6: TRAFFIC SIGNAL COORDINATION AND SYNCHRONIZATION

Coordinate traffic signal operations with the State, County, and adjacent communities where feasible. Install coordinated signal systems on all major arterial roadways in the City to improve traffic flow as appropriate. Funding should be obtained from all available City, County, State and Federal sources, as well as developer contributions.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	2.7, 2.8, 2.9

C 7: LEVEL OF SERVICE

Maintain a minimum Level of Service "D" operating standard at all signalized intersections under Los Altos jurisdiction. Identify minimum Levels of Service for intersections shared with adjacent communities and pursue agreements with adjacent communities to maintain those intersections at the agreed upon Level of Service.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	2.8, 2.9

C 8: PROJECT REVIEW

Evaluate development proposals and design roadway and access improvements based on established Level of Service standards and vehicle trip distribution to minimize impact on local residential and collector streets:



- 1) Require public review of any development project or other proposal that causes an intersection to degrade by one or more levels of service (e.g., LOS A to B, LOS B to D);
- 2) Require a transportation analysis for all development projects resulting in 50 or more net new daily trips. The analysis shall identify potential impacts to intersection and roadway operations, project access, and non-automobile travel modes, and shall identify feasible improvements or project modifications to reduce or eliminate impacts. Impact significance should be consistent with the criteria maintained by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. City staff should have the discretion to require focused studies regarding access, sight distance, and other operational and safety issues;
- 3) As part of the development review process, the primary access for major traffic generators should be established on arterial roadways, and overall access should be designed to minimize traffic intrusion to residential neighborhoods; and
- 4) Only after preparation of an environmental impact report with associated findings, accept Level of Service E or F operations at City-monitored signalized intersections after finding that no practical and feasible improvements can be implemented to mitigate the lower levels of service. A proposed development that causes or exacerbates LOS E or F operations and causes a significant intersection impact should be considered for approval if it will provide a clear, overall benefit to the City (e.g., library expansion or relocation, new community center).

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works, Community Development
Funding Source: General Fund, development fees
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 2.4, 2.7, 2.9, 2.12

C 9: MONITOR TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Monitor local traffic and circulation regularly to ensure safety and address congestion.

- 1) Identify potential capacity improvements and access modifications to maintain adequate circulation in the vicinity of major traffic generators (e.g., shopping centers);
- 2) Identify, monitor and pursue projects for specific sites of traffic safety or operational concerns;
- 3) Monitor all City-controlled signalized intersections operating at LOS E or F by conducting biennial peak-period traffic counts or obtaining counts from traffic studies. Also, monitor stop sign-controlled locations for potential signalization through counts and warrant analysis. Evaluate the results and report to the City Council; and
- 4) Consider installation of a traffic signal or other control device (e.g., traffic circle/roundabout) at a stop sign-controlled intersection if one or more of the controlled movements operates at LOS E or F, signal warrants are met to the satisfaction of the Public Works Department, or a safety problem exists.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.12, 2.15, 2.16



C 10: BACKGROUND GROWTH ASSUMPTIONS

Re-assess every five years the assumptions of background growth (employment and traffic growth in Santa Clara County) and its effect on Los Altos traffic.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	2.1

C 11: NEIGHBORHOOD STREET LIGHTING

Examine nighttime accident rates and complaints in order to selectively locate street lighting.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	Assessment District
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	2.17

C 12: STREET DESIGN STANDARDS

Revise and/or adopt street design standards, focused on pedestrian and bicycle safety, landscaping, traffic calming and neighborhood character. If requested by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, consider requiring (and require developers to provide) bus loading areas or turnouts for buses.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	2.1, 2.6, 2.9, 2.12, 2.16, 2.21

C 13: CONSISTENT RIGHT-OF-WAY

In areas where excess right-of-way is inconsistent with residential street design standards, consider programs to help create consistency.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	2.5

TRANSIT

C 14: TRANSIT SERVICE LEVELS

Work with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority to ensure maintenance of adequate service levels and to evaluate the need to modify routing, bus stop and shelter locations, scheduling, and equipment. Route adjustments should be made to include major collectors through the City and service should link Downtown and other commercial areas to neighborhoods.



Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.7

C 15: TRANSIT STOP ENHANCEMENTS

Work with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority and/or require development projects to provide transit stop enhancements including benches, shelters, schedule information, and real-time bus location data. Stop locations should be located near building entrances to encourage bus ridership.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works
Funding Source: General Fund, development fees
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 3.1, 3.2

C 16: COORDINATE TRAVEL MODE IMPROVEMENTS

Identify bicycle and pedestrian projects in the CIP that help to complete or enhance connections to bus stops consistent with the Los Altos Bicycle Plan.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8

C 17: DEMAND-RESPONSIVE SERVICE

Support the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority demand-responsive (OUTREACH) service and other paratransit operations.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 3.1, 3.2

C 18: ADVERTISE TRANSIT OPTIONS

Work with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority to provide information to the public on available alternative transportation choices and routes. Information should be posted in commercial areas and in public buildings.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 3.2, 3.3



C 19: FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Encourage local businesses to provide employees with transit passes or other financial incentives to use transit to commute to and from the workplace.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	Private investment
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	3.6

C 20: SHUTTLE FEASIBILITY EVALUATION

A feasibility study should be completed to identify routes, stop locations, service frequency, and funding sources for operating costs of an intra-city shuttle system. Funding for the study should be obtained from federal and state grants/sources and private development projects.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	Federal and State Funds and Grants
Time Frame:	2002/2003
Related Policies:	3.7

C 21: EXPANSION OF REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEMS

Promote through regional cooperation the expansion and continued operation of Caltrain, BART and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Light Rail and other transit systems.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	3.1, 3.3

BICYCLES AND PEDESTRIANS

C 22: BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Implement the City's current Bicycle Transportation Plan to ensure development of bicycle facilities and amenities as follows:

- 1) Upgrade existing bikeways and develop new bicycle facilities in accordance with the standards and locations in the Los Altos Bicycle Plan;
- 2) Install bicycle-sensitive loop detectors at intersections through pavement management or new CIP projects;
- 3) Require the provision of secure bicycle parking (e.g., racks, lockers) as part of all future development projects for non-single-family residential development;
- 4) Encourage non-residential development projects to include amenities such as showers and lockers for employees to further encourage bicycling as an alternative to automobile travel;
- 5) Prohibit motorized vehicular traffic on trails, pathways, parks and dedicated open space areas except for maintenance and emergency purposes; and



Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works, Community Development, Police
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7

C 23: COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF BICYCLE ROUTES AND SAFETY

Develop a community awareness program to encourage local use of paths, lanes and routes including posting maps on the City’s website. Include bicycle and pedestrian safety and enforcement when developing community awareness programs.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works, Police Department
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3

C 24: SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Coordinate with the school districts and other entities to develop “Suggested Route to School Plans” for all public and private schools in the City and for schools serving students living in Los Altos. Plans shall identify all pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and traffic control devices for residents to determine the most appropriate travel route. The plans shall also identify existing easements for sidewalks.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works, Police Department
Funding Source: General Fund, Grants
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6

C 25: IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND SAFETY

Increase priority of pedestrian safety projects (i.e., pedestrian street crossings, sidewalks or pathways) as part of the Capital Improvement Program. Review the need to install sidewalks or paths and crosswalks on all City streets within one-half mile of all public schools within the City. Paths should also be provided to enhance access to schools in other jurisdictions that serve students residing in Los Altos.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works, Police Department
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6

C 26: BICYCLE FACILITY FUNDING

Make bikeway improvements a funding priority by:

- 1) Continuing to consider financing bikeway design and construction as part of the City’s annual construction and improvement fund;
- 2) Incorporating bikeway improvements as part of the Capital Improvement Program and pavement management efforts; and



- 3) Aggressively pursuing regional funding and other Federal and State sources for new bike-ways.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works, Police
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	4.4, 4.5, 4.6

PARKING AND TRUCK TRAFFIC

C 27: SPECIAL PARKING STANDARDS

Establish special parking standards as follows:

- 1) Require on-site covered parking in review of alterations to existing residential structures;
- 2) Provide for an adequate supply of short-term parking in commercial retail zones; and
- 3) Regulate commercial parking lots to protect residential neighbors to include times and location of commercial deliveries and garbage collection, overnight parking, and other unauthorized use.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Community Development, Public Works, Police
Funding Source:	General Fund, development fees
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	5.1, 5.4

C 28: PARKING MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Develop a parking management program in the Downtown periphery, Downtown core, and in other commercial areas. Consider the following solutions to address parking constraints in commercial lots:

- 1) Parking space time restrictions (e.g., 30 minute parking);
- 2) Metered parking;
- 3) Shared parking for businesses with off peak hours;
- 4) Employee parking location and/or time restrictions; and
- 5) Restrictions on time and location of commercial deliveries (e.g., outside peak periods).

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works
Funding Source:	General Fund
Time Frame:	2002/2003 and Ongoing
Related Policies:	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.2



C 29: UNDERGROUND/ABOVE-GROUND PARKING

Undertake a study to assess the feasibility of underground/above-ground parking in the Downtown.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works, Community Development
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: 2002/2003
Related Policies: 5.6

C 30: TRAFFIC AND PARKING IMPACT FEES

Consider establishing traffic impact fees to reduce the impact of new development or redevelopment. Consider parking fees in lieu of providing required parking in the Downtown area to encourage additional housing opportunities.

Responsible Agency/Department: Community Development
Funding Source: Development fees
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 2.13, 5.3

C 31: PARKING ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS

Consider establishing a parking assessment district to expand Downtown parking and provide parking for other commercial areas.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works, Community Development
Funding Source: General Fund, development fees, private funds
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6

C 32: CODE ENFORCEMENT

Expedite responses to requests for inoperable vehicle removal and apply neighborhood blight ordinance standards.

Responsible Agency/Department: Police
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: 2002/2003
Related Policies: 5.2

C 33: TRUCK ROUTE ENFORCEMENT

Continue to strictly enforce the truck route ordinance by citing violators. Enforcement will be provided by the police department similar to other on-street parking areas in the City.

Responsible Agency/Department: Police
Funding Source: General Fund
Time Frame: Ongoing
Related Policies: 6.1



C 34: LOADING ZONES

Establish, maintain, and enforce reserved commercial truck loading zones on public streets in appropriate areas such as downtown and other commercial concentrations. Time limits for designated loading areas may be established to allow public on-street parking in loading zones at other times. Require new or redevelopment projects to provide on-site truck loading areas except for areas such as Downtown, which includes small lots.

Responsible Agency/Department:	Public Works, Community Development, Police
Funding Source:	General Fund, development fees
Time Frame:	Ongoing
Related Policies:	6.2