

# *History and Culture of Los Gatos*

## **Location**

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

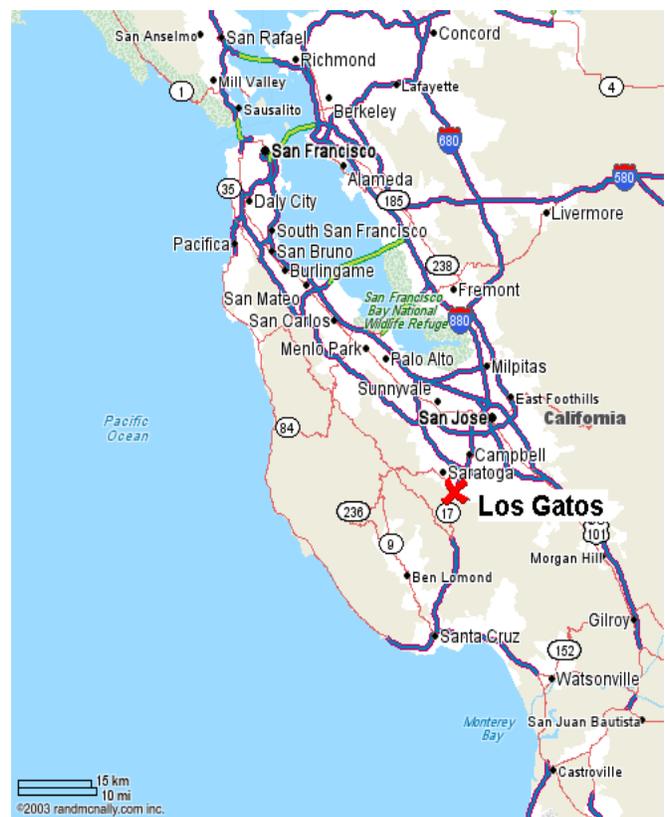
Los Gatos encompasses a wide variety of terrain, ranging from flat topography at the edge of the valley floor to densely wooded hillsides. Both the valley and hillsides are interspersed with creeks, streams, and riparian habitat. The sharp contrast between the valley floor and the hillsides provides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

## **History**

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

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

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



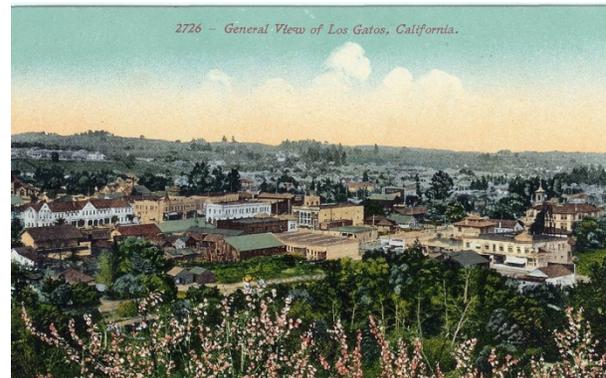
Because of its distance from other centers of population, Los Gatos developed as a complete community including residential, business, and industrial elements. Preserving Los Gatos as a complete and well-balanced community has been and remains a prominent goal of residents. From the first 100-acre town site in 1890 with a population of 1,652, Los Gatos grew slowly so that by 1963 the area was 6.3 square miles, with a population of 11,750. Today Los Gatos covers nearly 15 square miles and has a population of about 30,000. This relatively slow growth over the first 80 years resulted in a human scale community with narrow streets and small buildings.

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



residents take great care and pride in the preservation of its historic business district and residential architecture, and, as a result, Los Gatos is one of the most beautiful, well-maintained, and desirable communities in the Bay Area. The Town's two museums, known as the Tait Avenue and Forbes Mill museums, also help to preserve the Town's valued history.

The slow growth of Los Gatos over an extended number of years has left the Town with a heritage of older, established residential areas and a downtown with many historic buildings representing the various eras in the Town's history. Both the Town's management and the Town's



### ***Community***

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

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

### ***Climate***

Los Gatos enjoys a mild Mediterranean climate, making it ideal for business, residential, and recreational opportunities. Summers are dry and warm in the 80 degrees to 100 degrees range. Winters are temperate and semi-moist in the 40 degrees to 60 degrees range. Los Gatos receives most of its precipitation from December through March. It is rare to see raindrops in the summer months.

### ***Transportation***

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

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



### ***Economy***

Innovation-based economies like Silicon Valley benefit from the constant change of globalization. The job base continues to diversify especially in the emerging area of clean technology, cloud based storage, and mobile software platforms. Silicon Valley's unique mix of talent, technology, and capital often translate into a genuine comparative advantage. All of these factors are expected to enable the region to continue on a pattern of growth outperforming the nation.



Nationwide home sales and valuations continue to rise, particularly in the Silicon Valley markets which trend well above the national average. Los Gatos property values continue to be among some of the highest in the state, confirming that the Town continues to be an attractive location for homebuyers and sellers.

The FY 2015/16 budget reflects the local and regional expectations for the economy. Economically sensitive revenue, such as sales tax, property tax, franchise fees, business license taxes, transit oriented tax, and interest earnings are projected to grow; private development activity has been forecasted to increase due to less speculative development and more client specific projects which have received more support from financial lending institutions.

Vacancy rates for commercial properties in Los Gatos are very low, and more than ever brick and mortar merchant locations must enhance their customer experience to compete with the stronger than ever online market. Additionally, much like the greater Silicon Valley,

office and R&D vacancies remain low as new businesses seek opportunity in the area in the way of startups and expansions.

### ***Town of Los Gatos Vision***

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

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

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





***What makes Los Gatos Special?***

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

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



# **STATISTICS SECTION**

## *Town of Los Gatos Statistics*

### **TOWN DEMOGRAPHICS:**

Current Town Area	15 Square Miles
Incorporated	August 10, 1887
Elevation	428 ft.
Miles of Streets	112
Number of Traffic Signals	28
Number of Registered Voters	19,000 – 21,000
Form of Government	Council Manager
Town Employee/Citizen Ratio	1:212

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

- 12 Neighborhood Parks
- Los Gatos Creek Trail
- 161 Acres of Designated Open Space
- Los Gatos-Saratoga Recreation District
  - Adult Recreation Center
  - Youth Recreation Center
- Los Gatos Library
- Forbes Mill History Museum
- New Museum Los Gatos

### **HOSPITALS**

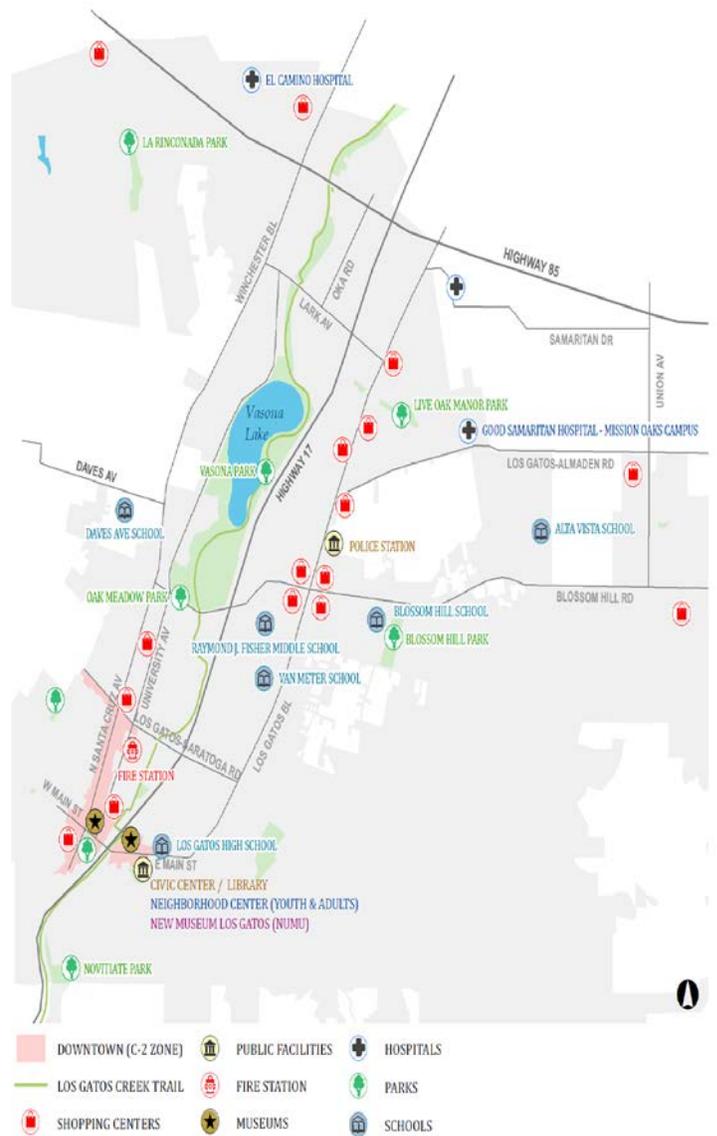
- Good Samaritan Hospital - Mission Oaks Campus
- El Camino Hospital

### **EDUCATION**

- 4 Elementary Schools
- 1 Junior High School
- 1 High School
- 1 Continuation Program
- 1 Independent Study
- 240 Teachers

### **POLICE SERVICES**

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

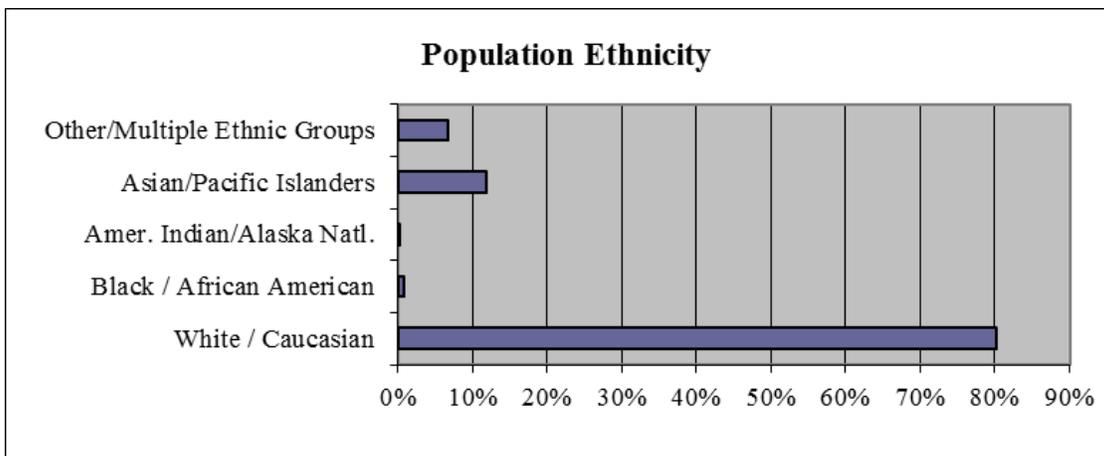
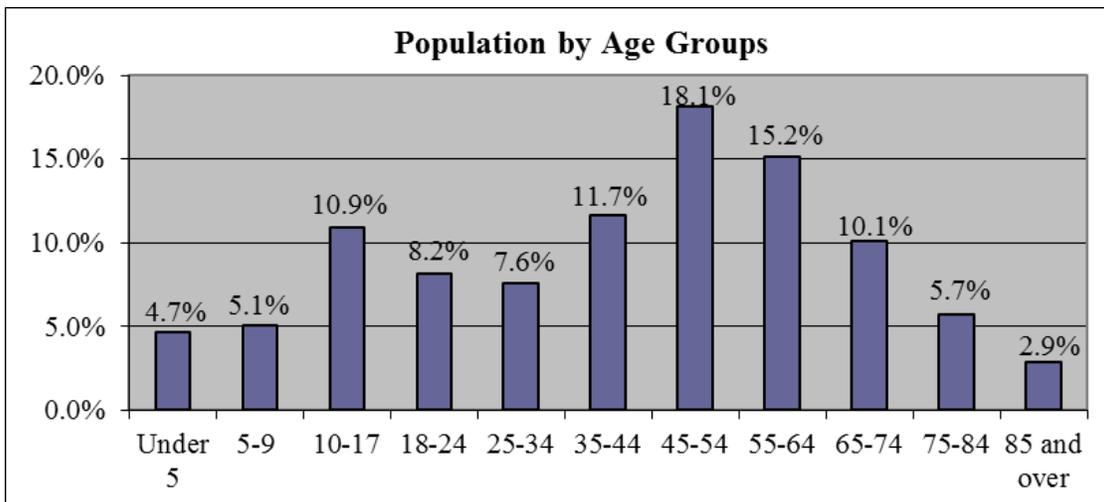


**WEATHER:**

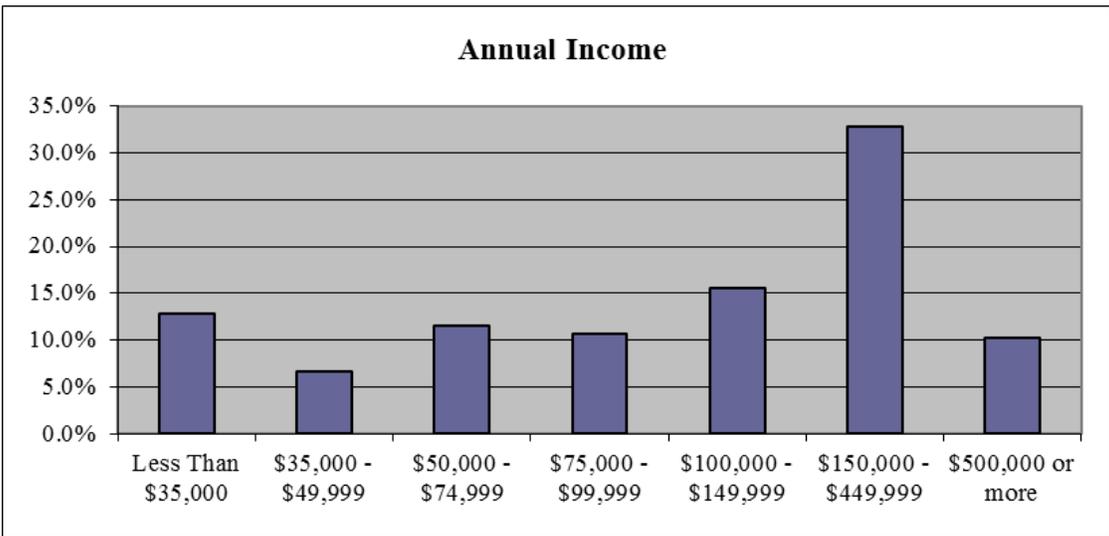
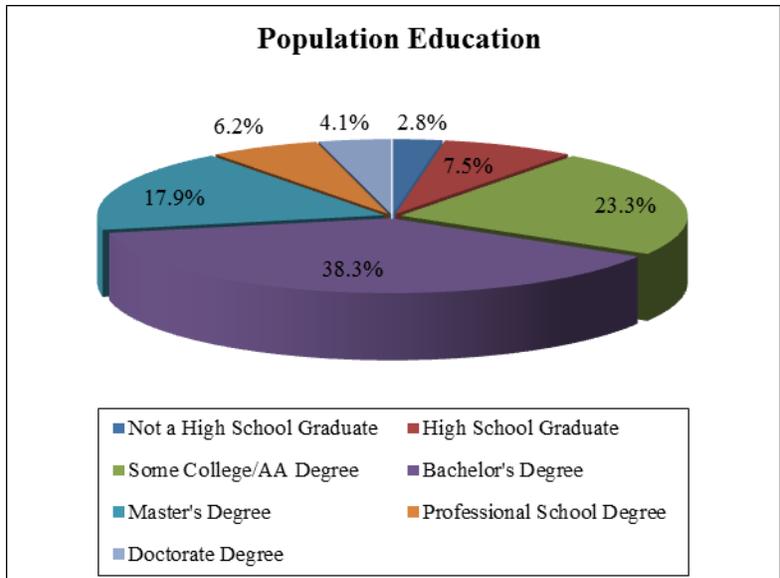
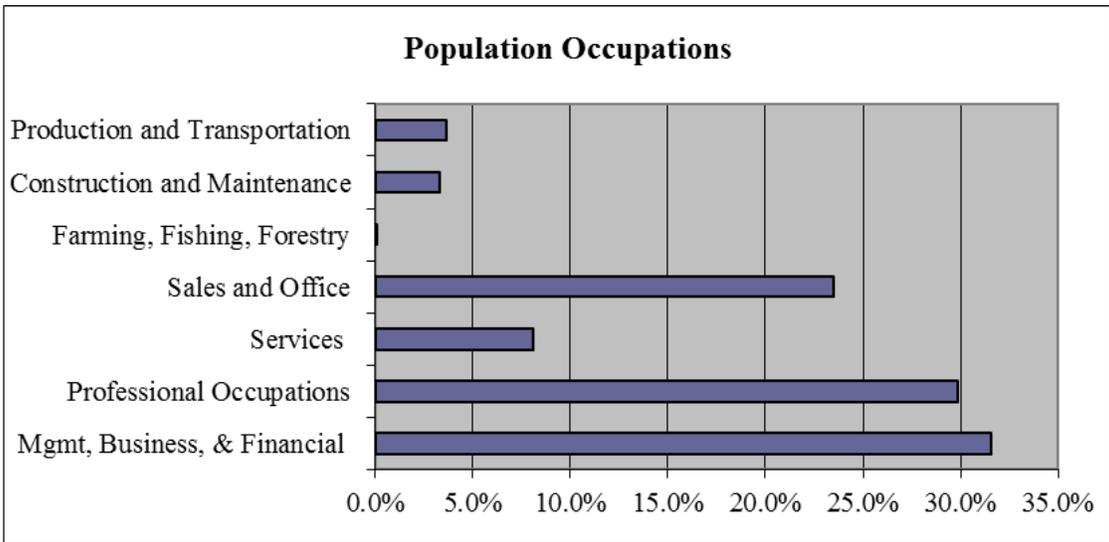
Average Temperatures (degrees Fahrenheit)	
Winter	37/63
Spring	42/76
Summer	51/86
Fall	42/83
Average Sunny Days	330 per year
Average precipitation	22.87 inches
Annual snowfall	0.00 inches

**POPULATION:**

1990 Census	28,013
2000 Census	28,523
2010 Census	29,413
2015 Estimates	30,505
State Ranking in Population	238 of 482

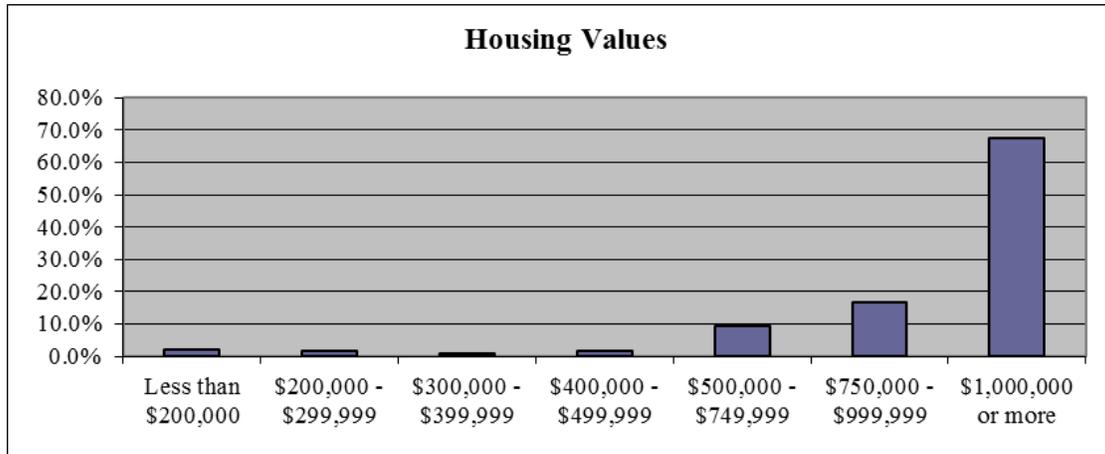


*Note: Demographic figures obtained from State of California and The Nielsen Company*



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<b>Housing Units</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Owner Occupied	8,410	65.1%
Renter Occupied	5,403	34.9%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>13,813</b>	<b>100%</b>



*Note: Demographic figures obtained from State of California and The Nielsen Company.*

## *Economic Factors*

### 2014/15 Top Twenty Local Secured Taxpayers

#### 2014-15 Top Twenty Local Secured Taxpayers

<u>Property Owner</u>	<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Assessed Value</u>	<u>% of Total (1)</u>
SI 32 LLC	Apartments	\$ 150,563,119	1.54%
Knowles Los Gatos LLC	Industrial	\$ 48,204,708	0.49%
KSL Capital Partners	Athletic Club	\$ 43,580,326	0.45%
LG Business Park LLC	Industrial	\$ 39,347,485	0.40%
Boccardo Corporation/BR3 Partners	Office Building	\$ 38,772,905	0.40%
San Jose Water Works	Water Company	\$ 36,693,453	0.38%
SRI Old Town LLC	Shopping Center	\$ 31,122,427	0.32%
Alberto Way Holdings LLC	Office Building	\$ 23,715,141	0.24%
Grosvenor USA Ltd.	Commercial	\$ 22,990,624	0.24%
Sobrato Interests IV LLC	Apartments	\$ 20,869,338	0.21%
El Camino Hospital	Medical Building	\$ 20,803,609 (2)	0.21%
Health Care REIT Inc.	Office Building	\$ 20,765,810	0.21%
DS Downing LP	Commercial	\$ 20,006,861	0.20%
Good Samaritan Hospital LP	Hospital	\$ 19,602,594	0.20%
750 University LLC	Office Building	\$ 19,000,000	0.19%
D&K Los Gatos LLC	Office Building	\$ 15,974,003	0.16%
Los Gatos Hotel Corp.	Hotel	\$ 15,573,314	0.16%
LG Hotel LLC	Hotel	\$ 15,448,057	0.16%
Shari Flick Trustee	Comercial	\$ 15,388,884	0.16%
Grade Way Associates VI	Office Building	\$ 15,163,152	0.16%
		<u>\$ 633,585,810</u>	<u>6.48%</u>

(1) 2014-15 Local Secured Assessed Valuation: \$9,766,765,025

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

*Source Data from California Municipal Statistics, Inc.*

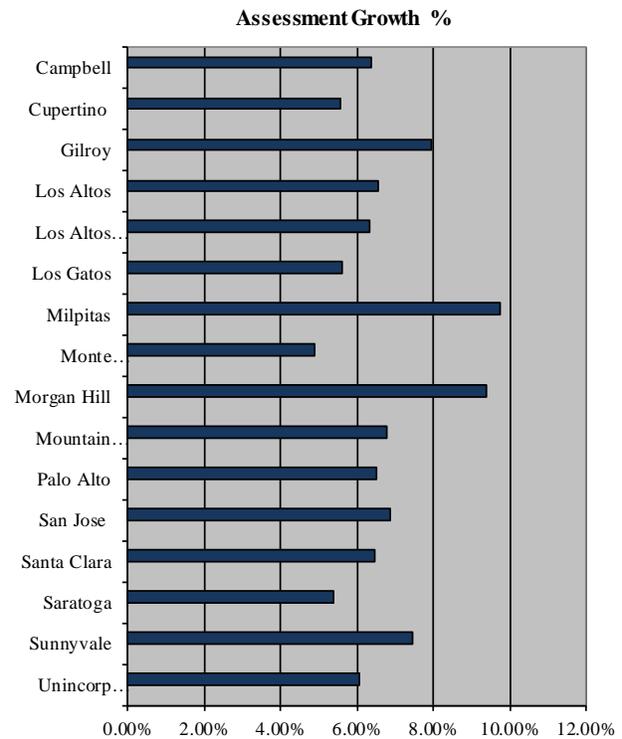
## Economic Factors

<b>Santa Clara County Assessment Roll Growth by City</b>			
(Values in \$Billions*)			
Santa Clara County Cities	Total Roll 2013	Total Roll 2012	Percent Growth**
Campbell	\$ 7.70	\$ 7.24	6.35%
Cupertino	17.10	16.20	5.56%
Gilroy	6.66	6.17	7.94%
Los Altos	11.89	11.16	6.54%
Los Altos Hills	6.21	5.84	6.34%
Los Gatos	9.99	9.46	5.60%
Milpitas	14.06	12.81	9.76%
Monte Sereno	1.72	1.64	4.88%
Morgan Hill	7.22	6.60	9.39%
Mountain View	20.03	18.76	6.77%
Palo Alto	27.24	25.58	6.49%
San Jose	140.97	131.93	6.85%
Santa Clara	28.75	27.01	6.44%
Saratoga	12.13	11.51	5.39%
Sunnyvale	31.43	29.25	7.45%
Unincorporated	14.23	13.42	6.04%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 357.33</b>	<b>\$ 334.58</b>	<b>0.88%</b>

\*Net of nonreimbursable exemptions

\*\*Percentage based on non-rounded values

Source: Santa Clara County's Office of the County Assessor 2015 Annual Report



### Major Employers as of June 30, 2015

Organization	Product/Services	Employees
Netflix	Internet Services	1,530
El Camino Hospital, Los Gatos	Health Industry	560
Courtside Tennis Club*	Leisure/Recreation	440
Safeway ( 3 locations)	Food Industry	314
Los Gatos Elementary School District	Education	273
Vasona Creek Health Care Ctr*	Health Industry	233
Good Samaritan Regional Cancer Center	Health Industry	200
Whole Foods Market*	Food Industry	179
Los Gatos -Saratoga Union High School District	Education	157
Town of Los Gatos*	Town Government	157

Source: MuniServices, LLC

Results based on direct correspondence with town's local businesses.

\*Includes full and part time

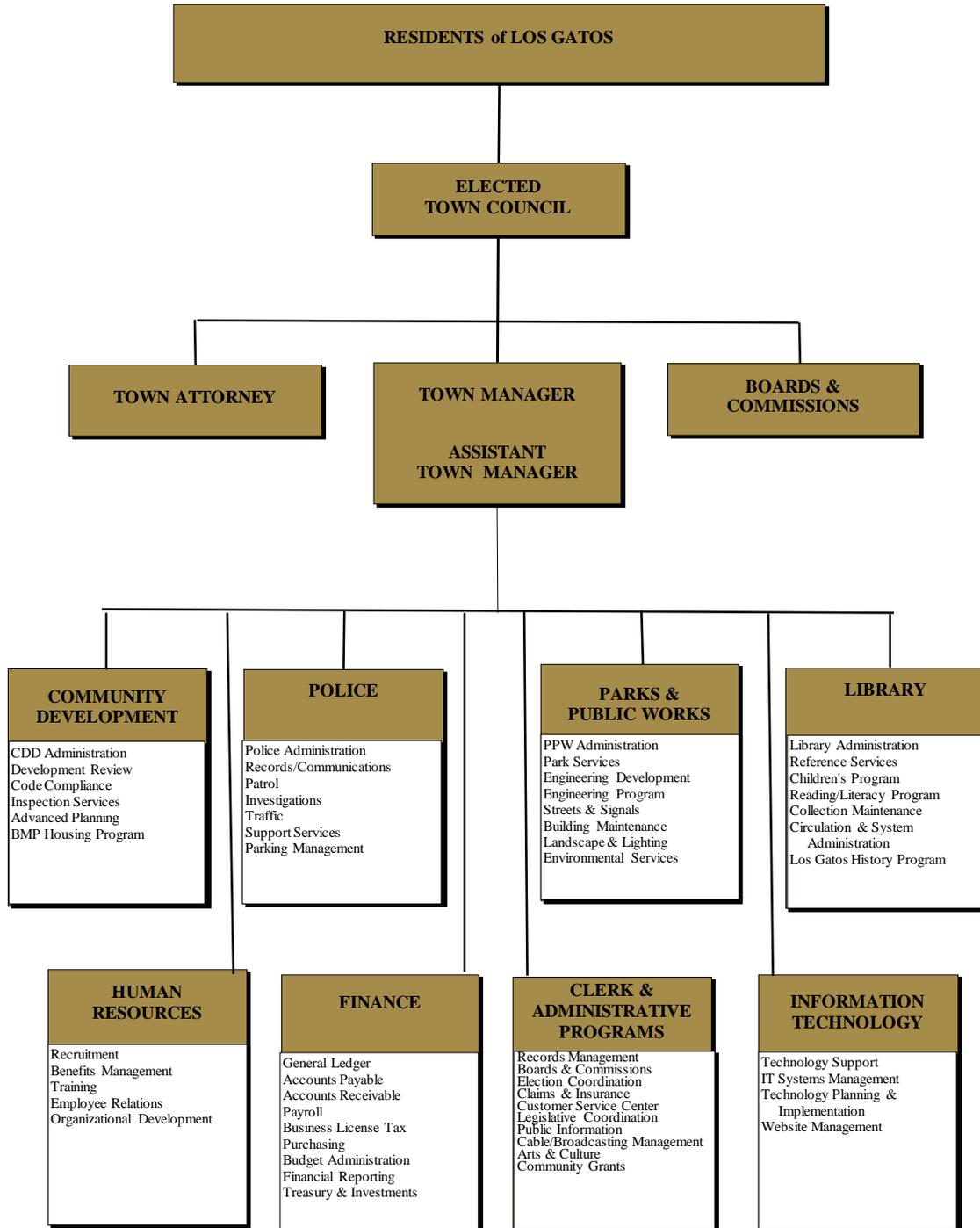
***Town Management***

Interim Town Manager .....Les White  
Assistant Town Manager / Community Development Director ..... Laurel Prevetti  
Chief of Police ..... Matt Frisby  
Finance and Administrative Services Director ..... Stephen Conway  
Human Resources Director ..... Rumi Portillo  
Town Librarians .....Henry Bankhead & Heidi Murphy  
Parks and Public Works Director .....Matt Morley  
Town Attorney ..... Robert Schultz



# Town of Los Gatos

## Organizational Structure



## ***Town of Los Gatos Commissions, Committees, and Advisory Boards***

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

### ***Planning Commission***

Makes recommendations regarding planning, zoning administration, and other land use regulatory controls.

### ***Arts and Culture Commission***

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

### ***Architectural Standards Committee***

Reviews and makes recommendations to the Planning Commission concerning a variety of proposed changes to Town design standards for private development.

### ***Board of Appeals***

Hears appeals of Building Regulations.

### ***Community and Senior Services Commission***

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

### ***Conceptual Development Advisory Committee***

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

### ***General Plan Committee***

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

### ***Historic Preservation Committee***

Advises the Planning Commission concerning major matters pertaining to historic preservation. Determines and issues approval for minor exterior alterations to a historic structure.

***Town of Los Gatos***  
***Commissions, Committees, and Advisory Boards***

***Library Board***

Represents the community in making recommendations regarding Library services.

***Parks Commission***

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

***Personnel Board***

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

***Transportation and Parking Commission***

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

***Youth Commission***

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

