



## 2. Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Element

Like many other communities in the United States, Los Gatos has a history which includes racial injustice. Often, racial injustice also leads to other forms of injustice, including social and environmental injustice, as well as other contributing factors including affordability and access to housing opportunities. A number of existing and former Town residents, who identify as Black; Indigenous; or People of Color (BIPOC); have come forward to share their experiences and to provide suggestions for increasing diversity (i.e., social, economic, and racial) and inclusivity in Town.

The Town recognizes that it needs to increase its efforts to ensure that all the members of the Los Gatos community (i.e., residents, workers, business owners, local organizations, and visitors) regardless of age and socio-economic status feel valued, safe, respected, included, and secure. Increasing diversity and inclusion involves enhancing meaningful community engagement, considering the implications of Town decisions for all members of the community, and requires new approaches to meet the changing needs of Los Gatos.

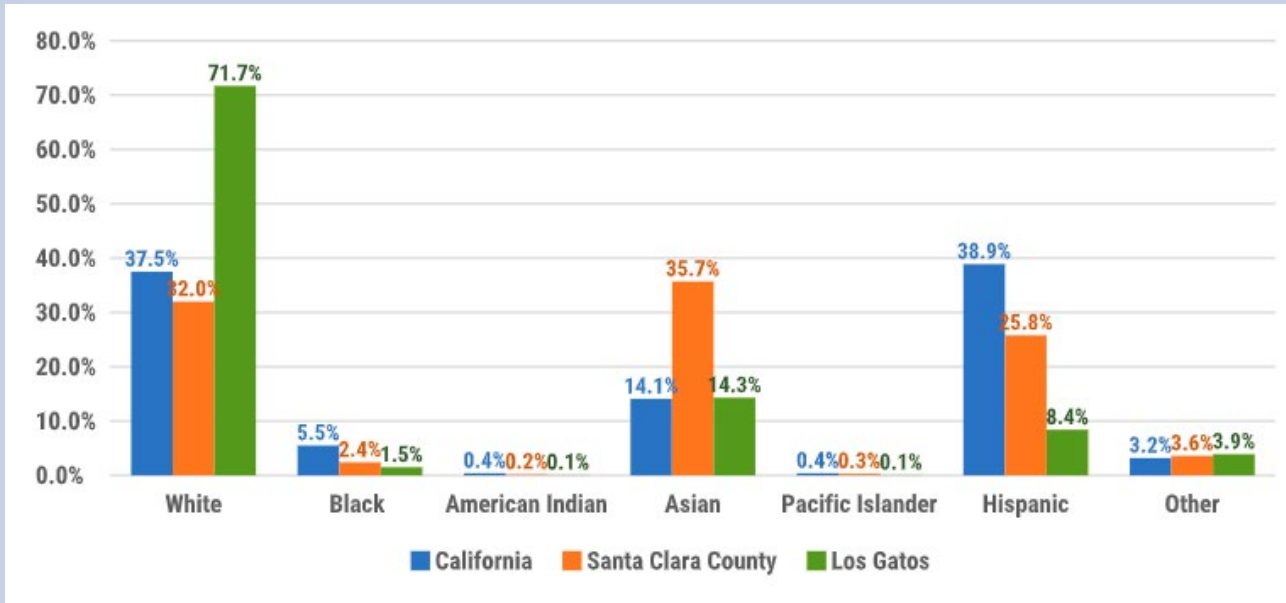
Los Gatos enjoys affluence and scores well in State-wide assessment tools such as CalEnviroScreen 3.0 and the California Healthy Places Index. Places and people of privilege have a responsibility to increase their awareness and understanding of social issues and use their agency to create a more inclusive and equitable society. This Element is a commitment to that responsibility and emphasizes making Los Gatos a more socially, economically, and racially diverse community. Making progress toward racial, social, and environmental justice can be difficult and requires all community members to recognize, engage, and act on these issues over a long period of time. As a result, this Element includes goals, policies, and programs that encourage and support local efforts to increase involvement in local governance processes and to improve local awareness of racial, social, and environmental injustice. This General Plan creates the framework through which residents are empowered to make progress towards equality.

### **2018 Town Demographics**

As of 2018, the median Los Gatos household income was \$140,395; over a third of Town households earned more than \$200,000. Educational attainment is similarly high. In Los Gatos, 64.7 percent of residents over age 25 have at least a bachelor's degree, and of those, nearly 45 percent also had earned a graduate or professional degree. Racial diversity, however, is lacking. In Los Gatos, 71.7 percent of residents were white, 14.3 percent Asian, 8.4 percent Hispanic or Latino, 3.9 other (multiple races), 1.5 percent Black or African American, and 0.2 percent American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander.

**Overall Comparison**

Comparing Los Gatos to Santa Clara County and the State of California (2018) provides a better representation of the differences between the population’s ethnic diversity of the three entities. Compared to Santa Clara County and the State of California, Los Gatos has a substantially greater white population and substantially smaller Hispanic and Latino population. The Hispanic and Latino population is three times smaller compared to the County and four times smaller compared to the State. Ethnic groups including Black and African American, American Indian, and Pacific Islander have a similar distribution, with the County and State outpacing the Town. Unlike other ethnic groups, the Asian population in Town is lower than the County but aligns with the makeup statewide.



Additional information regarding age and socio-economic data for the Town is located in the General Plan Background Report.

The themes discussed in this Element lay the foundation for creating a more equitable and inclusive environment for all Town residents, businesses, visitors, and organizations of Los Gatos. In addition to those contained in this Element, equity-oriented goals and policies can also be found throughout this Plan, particularly in the Housing, Mobility, and Land Use Elements, and are marked by an **EJ** icon.

The Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Element is divided into the following sections:

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### Key Terms

**BIPOC.** Acronym referring to Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color.

**Community Member.** Any individual who resides, owns property, is a business owner, or is employed in the Town of Los Gatos.

**Disadvantaged Community.** An area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) pursuant to Section 39711 of the California Health and Safety Code or a predominately low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.

**Environmental Justice.** The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, incomes, political and religious affiliation, and national origins with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies including climate adaptation strategies.

**Equality.** Is sameness; everyone gets the same thing. Equality focuses on everyone getting the same opportunity, but often ignores the realities of historic exclusion and power differentials among whites and other racialized groups.

**Equity.** Ensures that outcomes in the conditions of well-being are improved for marginalized groups, lifting outcomes for all. Equity is a measure of justice.

**Explicit Bias.** Conscious attitudes and beliefs about a person or group, also known as overt and intentional bias.

**Implicit Bias.** Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, decisions, and actions in an unconscious manner.

**Resident.** Any individual who resides in the Town of Los Gatos.

**Social Capital.** A concept in social science that involves the potential of individuals to secure benefits and invent solutions to problems through membership in social networks. Social capital revolves around three dimensions: interconnected networks of relationships between individuals and groups (social ties or social participation), levels of trust that characterize these ties, and resources or benefits that are both gained and transferred by virtue of social ties and social participation.

**Socially Disadvantaged Individuals and Groups.** Socially disadvantaged individuals and groups who have been subjected to prejudice or some form of discrimination or bias because of their perceived identity as a member of a particular group (i.e., race, ethnicity, culture, sex, political or religious affiliation, sexual orientation, age, immigration status) without regard to their individuality and/or merit.

### 2.1 Racial and Social Justice

This section identifies goals and policies which seek to advance Town efforts toward diversity and inclusivity. Implementation of the programs presented will allow the Town to monitor its progress in achieving racial, social, and environmental justice. It is the Town's intent to take actionable efforts to implement a more racially and socially just Los Gatos.

The following goals and policies are intended to promote equality in Los Gatos.

RSEJ-1

Support equity, inclusion, and access to opportunities for all community members, employees, businesses, visitors, and local organizations.



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- RSEJ-2.6 Diverse Town Staff**  
Promote equitable and anti-bias hiring procedures that focus on recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse Town staff.
- RSEJ-2.7 Cultural Proficiency and Anti-Bias Training for Town Staff**  
Implement and require cultural proficiency and anti-bias training for all Town employees and support similar training efforts undertaken by the business community.
- RSEJ-2.8 Community Diversity, Sensitivity, and Awareness Training**  
Promote cultural proficiency and anti-bias training for all members of the community including residents, business owners, and local organizations.
- RSEJ-2.9 Enhance Public Safety Collaboration**  
Strengthen the Town’s longstanding commitment to public safety by proactively reaching out to community members to hear concerns about policing and work collaboratively with police and community to find viable solutions.
- RSEJ-2.10 Implement Best Practices in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing**  
Further the Town’s commitment to build community trust, procedural justice, and de-escalation of force and strengthen partnerships with mental health providers to address the societal issues that involve calls for police services.

### 2.2 Environmental Justice

Los Gatos is committed to improving the well-being of all Town residents and those affected by Town actions in neighboring communities. The objectives contained in this section strive to reduce health risks by minimizing pollution exposure, improving air quality, and promoting equitable access to public facilities, healthy food, and safe and sanitary housing.

The following goals and policies will guide the incorporation of environmental justice for all citizens of Los Gatos.

#### RSEJ-3

Ensure that land use decisions do not adversely impact disadvantaged individuals and groups differently than the population as a whole. **EJ**

- RSEJ-3.1 Fair Treatment and Meaningful Involvement**  
**EJ** Provide for the fair treatment and meaningful involvement in respect to the development and review of land use decision and policies for all people regardless of income, religious or political affiliation, race, color, or national origin.
- RSEJ-3.2 Environmental Justice in Relation to Land Use**  
**EJ** Evaluate and avoid, reduce, and/or mitigate potential adverse health and safety impacts associated with land use decisions and provide for the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders regardless of income, race, color, or national origin.
- RSEJ-3.3 Reducing Negative Impacts from Potential Hazards**  
**EJ** Develop and implement additional project-specific mitigation measures in order to reduce negative impacts associated with environmental hazards, including, but not limited to, industrial operations, Town infrastructure, and air, light, and noise pollution.

RSEJ-3.4

EJ

**Coordination on Siting of Utilities**

Coordinate with utility providers in the siting, site layout, and design of gas and electric facilities, including changes to existing facilities, to minimize environmental, and safety impacts on existing and future residents.

RSEJ-4

Actively advocate to ensure all community members have access to healthy foods, education, green spaces, and medical services.

EJ HC

RSEJ-4.1

EJ HC

**Acceptance of Government-Issued Vouchers**

Coordinate with Farmer’s Market vendors and local food retailers to accept payment through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), which allows residents in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to purchase food with their program benefits.

RSEJ-4.2

EJ HC

**Regulations Allowing Healthy Foods**

Adopt and implement land use policies, regulations, and Ordinances which allow for and promote increased access to healthy food options (i.e., groceries, farmers markets, and community gardens).

RSEJ-4.3

SUS EJ

**Access to Community Assets**

Identify and address gaps in access to residential, commercial, recreation facilities, natural open spaces areas, and health resources, including mental and emotional health, such that these community assets are available to all.

RSEJ-4.4

EJ

**Equity in Capital Projects**

Promote equitable investment in capital improvements Town-wide.

RSEJ-4.5

EJ

**Non-Profit Partnerships**

Collaborate with non-profit and governmental sectors to provide assistance to the homeless and access to healthcare, rental assistance and food assistance, and other poverty alleviating programs and services.

RSEJ-4.6

EJ

**Equitable Access and Distribution of Tree Canopies**

Ensure equitable distribution of tree canopy, green space, and parks to increase quality of life and promote mental and emotional health.



*Additional policies relating to healthy communities and social services are covered in Section 5.6 (Public Facilities and Services) and Section 5.13 (Healthy Community) in the Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element.*

RSEJ-5

Develop, implement, and enforce policies to ensure access to safe and sanitary housing throughout the community.

EJ

RSEJ-5.1

EJ

**Construction Safety Regulations and Code Enforcement**

Develop and adopt policies, regulations, and Ordinances which reflect up-to-date construction and safety measures for all residential structures, while continuing to take enforcement actions for violations of any municipal or State building and safety codes.

RSEJ-5.2

EJ

**Clean and Safe Drinking Water**

Ensure access to clean and safe drinking water for all community members.

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*Additional policies relating to access to water services in the Town are covered in Section 5.1 (Water) in the Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element.*

### 2.3 Civic Engagement in the Public Decision-Making Process

Racial, social, and environmental justice efforts must be rooted in a strong culture of civic engagement in the Town’s decision-making processes. Studies have shown that well-rounded public engagement processes increase social capital in projects and promote equitable community development. The Town is committed to goals and policies that build social capital through engagement and empowerment of the public, while emphasizing public participation, transparency, and inclusion.



*Policies within this section are specifically designed to enhance communications to underrepresented populations. General civic engagement in planning is covered in Section 3.8 (Civic Engagement) in the Land Use Element.*

The following goal and policies will guide inclusive public decision-making processes.

#### RSEJ-6

Engage the public, in particular, socially disadvantaged individuals and groups, in Town decision-making and facilitate public involvement in civic life.

#### RSEJ-6.1

##### **Community Capacity-Building**

Collaborate with local organizations and partners to build and strengthen historically marginalized communities’ capacity to participate in local planning, governmental affairs, and policy decision-making.

#### RSEJ-6.2

##### **Leadership Development**

Support leadership development programs for historically marginalized, economically, and socially disadvantaged individuals and groups to enhance effective engagement in Town processes.

#### RSEJ-6.3

##### **Opportunities to Communicate with Town Leaders**

Develop, provide, promote, and implement new and innovative approaches to facilitate communication between members of the community and Town elected officials and staff members.

#### RSEJ-6.4

##### **Facilitate a Culture of Inclusion and Compassion**

Work with non-profit, faith, education, and other community-based partners to facilitate a culture of inclusion, empathy, compassion, acceptance, and unity.

#### RSEJ-6.5

##### **Transparency and Public Participation Opportunities**

Facilitate transparent Town decision-making processes through enhanced public outreach, engagement, and participation, including socially disadvantaged individuals and groups.

#### RSEJ-6.6

##### **Accessibility to Town Events**

Schedule Town events using different days, times, and formats (i.e., virtual and digital accessibility) to encourage and facilitate participation among community members with work, school, and other obligations that conflict with more traditionally scheduling.

## 2.4 Implementation Programs

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
<b>A Community-Based Budget Process</b> Develop and facilitate a community-based budgeting process to provide the public an opportunity to identify funding priorities annually. This program could feature in-person and online engagement opportunities.	RSEJ-1.1 RSEJ-1.2	Town Manager			■	
<b>B Equity Evaluation of the Proposed Budget</b> Annually evaluate the proposed Capital Improvement Budget and any service expansion/contraction in the Operating Budget to ensure that all neighborhoods are treated equitably in the availability of services and infrastructure investment.	RSEJ-1.2	Town Manager			■	
<b>C Town Staff Diversity and Other Training</b> Require all Town staff to undergo on-going diversity and implicit bias training.	RSEJ-1.3 RSEJ-2.6	Town Manager	■			■
<b>D Expand Recruitment for Town Employment Opportunities to Attract Diverse Candidates</b> Determine effective recruitment strategies to attract diverse candidates to Town employment opportunities. Work with educational institutions and other entities to promote local government job opportunities with middle school, high school, technical school, and college students.	RSEJ-1.3 RSEJ-2.5	Town Manager  Human Resources	■			
<b>E Social and Racial Justice Equality Survey</b> Develop an annual survey which measures the successfulness of advancing social equity and diversity Town-wide.	RSEJ-2.3 RSEJ-2.4 RSEJ-2.5 RSEJ-2.8	Town Manager	■		■	
<b>F Social and Racial Justice Commission</b> Form a Social and Racial Justice Commission that will serve as an advisory board to the Town Council to advance the Town’s racial equity work.	RSEJ-2.4	Town Manager	■			■
<b>G Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Outreach</b> Develop clear and inclusive outreach materials to increase and advance racial, social, and environmental justice initiatives.	RSEJ-2.4	Town Manager	■			■
<b>H Career and Job Training</b> Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to organize an annual career and job fair with local employers to highlight local employment and employment training opportunities for Los Gatos residents.	RSEJ-2.5	Town Manager	■		■	



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Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
<b>I Diversity, Sensitivity, and Awareness Training</b> Develop diversity, sensitivity, and awareness training courses and curriculum for residents, business owners, and local organizations to take part in. Training could include, but is not limited to, an informational column in the weekly newsletter and/or links to recommended online material, lectures, and community engagement events.	RSEJ-2.8	Town Manager	■			■
<b>J Citizens Police Academy</b> Implement a Citizens Police Academy, or similar program, to educate community members in law enforcement policies, practices, and problem-solving, as well as promoting the opportunity for one-on-one interaction with Department members in a relaxed environment.	RSEJ-2.9 RSEJ-2.10	Town Manager  Police Department	■			■
<b>K Community Engagement</b> Develop mechanisms to communicate and engage members of the community who are not typically active in civic issues to foster relationships with the Town and the Police Department. This can be accomplished by leveraging technology and by focusing resources on non-enforcement interaction with the community.	RSEJ-2.9 RSEJ-2.10	Town Manager  Police Department	■			■
<b>L Acceptance of Food Vouchers</b> Research the viability of increasing support for the acceptance of food vouchers at local food retailers and farmers markets.	RSEJ-4.1	Town Manager	■			
<b>M Healthy Food Access Regulations Audit and Update</b> To remove any administrative barriers to increase access to healthy foods, conduct an internal audit of and make necessary changes to Town regulations, including but not limited to the Zoning Ordinance. <b>EJ HC</b>	RSEJ-4.2	Community Development		■		
<b>N Capital Improvement Prioritization</b> Create a defined set of criteria that measures and prioritizes equitable distribution of Capital Improvement (CI) Projects Town-wide. <b>EJ</b>	RSEJ-4.4	Parks and Public Works  Town Manager	■			■
<b>O Tree Canopy Study</b> Develop a study to measure tree canopy distribution throughout the Town and encourage the use of native plants when increasing green space.	RSEJ-4.6	Parks and Public Works		■		

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
<p><b>P Rental Multi-Family Housing Inspection Program</b>                      Create a program to ensure that all rental multi-family housing is inspected on a three to five-year cycle to ensure compliance with all building, housing, and other codes for safe and sanitary housing.                      EJ</p>	RSEJ-5.1	Town Manager <hr/> Community Development <hr/> Code Compliance		■		
<p><b>Q Expand Outreach and Communication Materials to Enhance Transparency and Participation</b>                      Develop clear and inclusive outreach materials, expand media campaigns, and implement other strategies to engage the public in the Town's processes.                      EJ</p>	RSEJ-6.5	Town Manager				■