

# Executive Summary

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## A Commitment to People

The City of Los Altos is making a strong commitment to putting people first through the adoption of this Pedestrian Master Plan. After a year-long public planning process, Los Altos joins many other cities in seeking to become a more walkable, livable, and healthy city. This plan identifies policies, programs, guidelines, and infrastructure projects that will better connect Los Altos residents to a wide range of destinations.

Highly walkable downtowns, employment centers, and community-serving nodes help reduce the need for additional vehicle trips, and are essential to the long-term ability to attract jobs and preserve existing single-family neighborhoods. While the City of Los Altos has made many recent investments on behalf of pedestrians, more can always be done to make the city the best walkable city it can be; this Plan helps identify ways to do so.

## Background

This Pedestrian Master Plan is the first ever developed for the City of Los Altos. This Plan is largely based on the policies and vision found in the Los Altos General Plan as well as the recently adopted Climate Action Plan.

Other planning efforts conducted by the City of Los Altos complement the goals of a Pedestrian Master Plan, including the Bicycle Transportation Plan, the Los Altos Collector Traffic Calming Plan, and the specific plans for downtown, Sherwood Gateway, and Loyola Corners.

## Plan Process

The City of Los Altos Pedestrian Master Planning process kicked off with a meeting during the summer of 2013. After an initial round of data collection and targeted public input, draft recommendations were developed and presented to the community for feedback at public workshop in April 2014. An informational booth was set up at the Farmers Market on State Street twice, staffed by BPAC members, City staff, and the consultant team. At all events, members of the public were invited to provide comments on the draft recommendations, with more than 200 comments received.



Figure ES-1: Members of the public discuss the Plan at the Los Altos Farmers Market

In tandem with the outreach process for the Pedestrian Master Plan, walk audits were held at Los Altos public schools in Spring 2014. These walk audits involved city staff, members of the BPAC, and members of the public. The walk audits observed conditions around schools during morning drop-off periods, leading to improvement recommendations found in Appendix E: Suggested Routes to School Report. In addition to these outreach opportunities, a Suggested Routes to School-focused online survey was distributed via email blast to families with K-8 students in Los Altos. The survey was distributed again at Fall 2014 Back to School Nights to allow for additional input.

Utilizing public input given earlier in the year, key components of the report were developed in Fall 2014, including prioritization and cost estimates for identified

projects, developing priority programmatic recommendations, concept plans for the Top 5 projects identified by the BPAC, and baseline pedestrian measurements for compliance with the Climate Action Plan.

The full draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan was made public in February of 2015. The Plan subsequently was reviewed by both the BPAC and the Los Altos City Council in the winter/spring of 2015, with full adoption in the spring of 2015.

## Priorities for Pedestrians in Los Altos

- **Maintain rural character** – Since Los Altos was incorporated in 1952, it has been characterized by tree-lined streets and a small village atmosphere. Providing context-sensitive walkways and pathways throughout Los Altos can help better connect the community while helping to maintain its rural and small-town style.
- **Activate local business districts** - The City of Los Altos offers a wide range of shopping districts for residents and visitors to enjoy. This Pedestrian Master Plan will help maintain the beauty and vitality that each district offers as well as connect those districts to their surrounding neighborhoods, encouraging residents to walk to go shopping instead of driving.
- **Support the implementation of Complete Streets** – Paired with other plans like the Los Altos Bicycle Master Plan and the Los Altos Collector Traffic Calming Plan, this plan will help Los Altos create streets that accommodate all road users in a comfortable and safe way.
- **Create viable safe routes to school throughout Los Altos** – The proposed walkway improvements from this plan will enhance the great neighborhoods of Los Altos. By ensuring safe routes to Los Altos schools, parents no longer have to drive their children to school which contributes to higher greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the incidence of asthma among children. Walking and biking to school can also help to reduce the risk of childhood obesity and diabetes.
- **Meet the goals of the Climate Action Plan by replacing car trips with walking trips** – The Los Altos Climate Action Plan has a goal to reduce GHG emissions by 7,760 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from transportation sources alone. This goal is nearly half of the total 2020 GHG reduction target. As 40 percent of all trips are two miles or less in distance, a more walkable Los Altos will help encourage residents to leave their car at home and help the City reduce air pollution.



Figure ES-2: Los Altos takes pride in its rural, small-town feel

## Plan Function

The City of Los Altos recognizes the value of walking, and has developed this Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan to improve the pedestrian environment and to establish itself as a more walkable, livable, and healthy city. This Plan outlines a broad vision, strategies, and actions for improving the pedestrian environment in Los Altos for people of all ages.

The recommended actions in this Plan are based on detailed research and extensive public outreach efforts that show that residents and visitors are looking for a more livable and sustainable Los Altos while maintaining the unique and charming character of the city.

The Plan will also serve as a way for Los Altos to secure funding for pedestrian projects. Having an adopted plan is extremely helpful in securing funding from state, federal, and private agencies. Adopting this plan does not commit the City to dedicate or allocate funds, but rather indicates the intent of the City to implement this plan over time, starting with the priority recommended projects and programs found below.

## Action Steps

### 1. Seek Multiple Funding Sources

Multiple approaches should be taken to facilitate pedestrian facility development. It is important to secure the funding necessary to undertake priority projects but also to develop a long-term funding strategy to allow continued development of the overall system. Capital and local funds for sidewalk and crosswalk construction should be set aside each year – even if only for a small amount – as local funding can be matched to outside funding sources. A variety of local, state, and federal options and sources exist and should be pursued. These funding options are described in Appendix D: Funding Sources. Other methods of pedestrian and bicycle facility development that are efficient and cost-effective are described at the end of Chapter 7: Implementation, Funding, & Climate Action Benefits.

### 2. Improve City Policies Regarding Pedestrians

The City already has a range of policies regarding pedestrians and pedestrian infrastructure, primarily found in the City’s mobility element of the General Plan and in the City’s newly adopted Climate Action Plan. This plan recommends policy updates and additions to further enhance the City’s commitment to pedestrians.

### 3. Implement Priority Recommended Projects

Los Altos currently has many gaps in its pedestrian network. Addressing key-gaps in the network in the near-term with targeted investment, facilities, and traffic calming will generate substantial benefit to residents across Los Altos. This plan not only ranked all recommended projects according to their level of priority, but also developed, in cooperation with the Los Altos BPAC, a “Top 5” list of projects and corridors for investment and improvement.

### 4. Implement Priority Recommended Programs

Beyond enhancements to the built environment, this plan also recommends key programs that the City should champion for encouraging more walking trips. As more facilities are built throughout Los Altos, parallel campaigns for encouragement, education, and enforcement can maximize the investment impact while reducing confusion or surprise around changes to the built environment. This plan not only identifies a range of programmatic offerings, but also provides a list of priority programs to pursue.



Figure ES-3: Los Altos should continue to support pedestrian-friendly events like the Corvette Spectacular

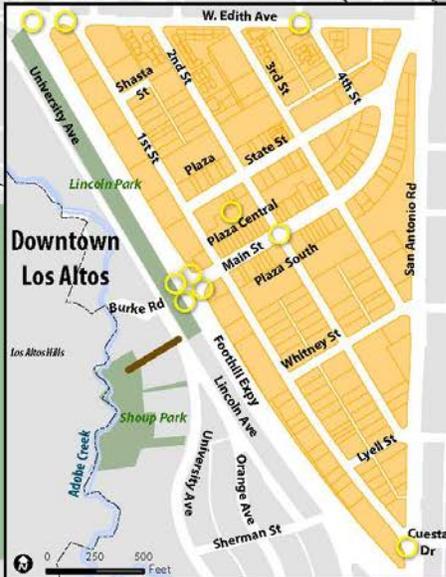
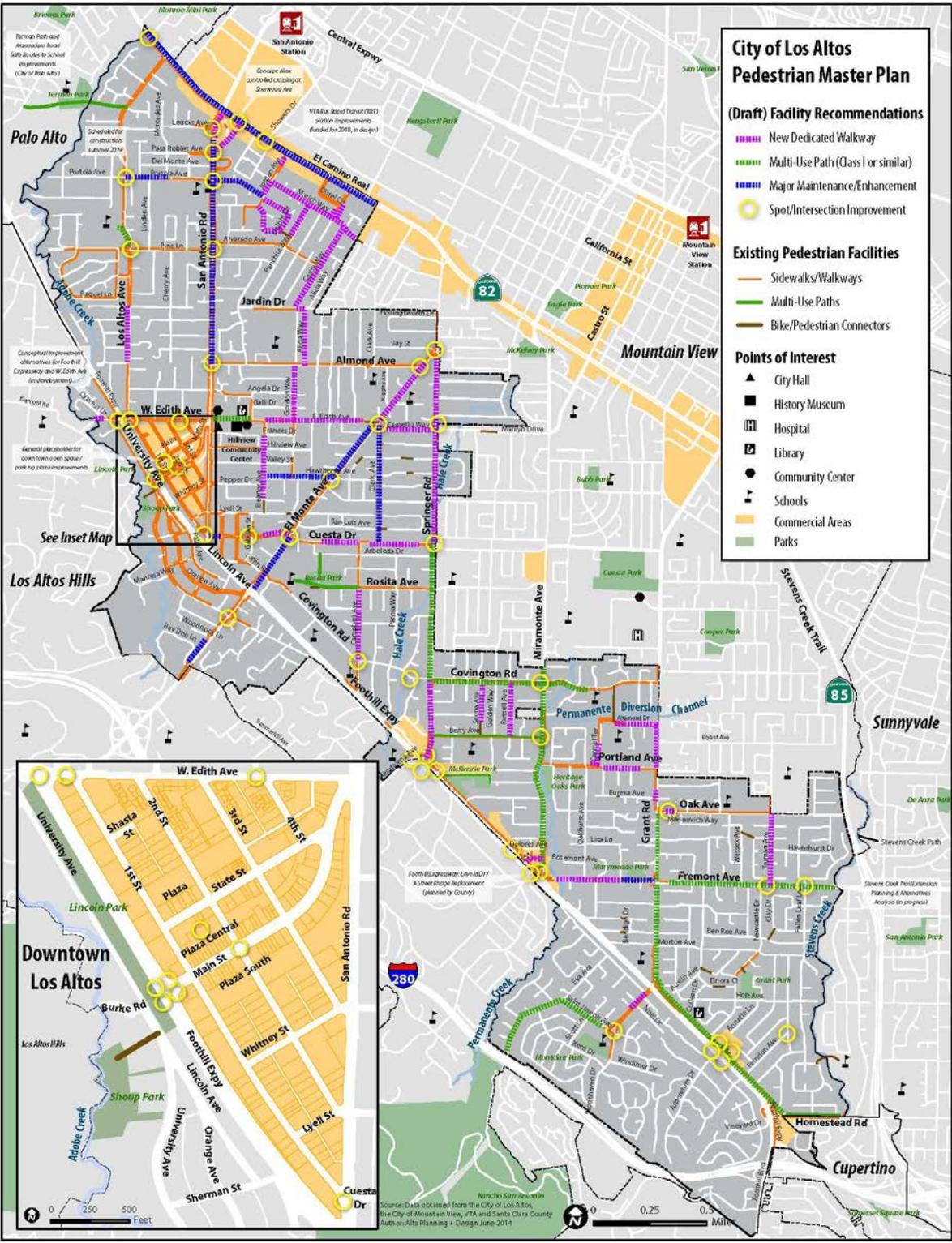
## **5. Benchmark & Reevaluate Progress**

Performance measures should be stated in an official City Walkway Benchmark Report within one year after this Plan is officially adopted. The report needs only to cover key performance measures, and should be concise (see Chapter 7: Implementation, Funding, & Climate Action Benefits). This report could also be a showcase of success stories and would serve as a barometer for work that still needs to be accomplished. Furthermore, the City should reevaluate its progress on the goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan every two years and engage in periodic updates to the plan as needed.

## **Priority Projects**

The full range of recommended infrastructure policies and projects are presented in Chapter 5: Pedestrian Network Improvements. All recommended projects were measured against a Pedestrian Suitability Index (PSI), an objective process of evaluating existing conditions for pedestrians against the likely demand for pedestrians facilities, for a range of trip purposes, on every one of Los Altos' streets. Projects were also measured against a range of other criteria, including ease of implementation, community feedback, estimated cost, and proximity to schools.

The map of all recommended projects can be found on the following page.



Source Data obtained from the City of Los Altos, the City of Mountain View, VTA and Santa Clara County. Author: Alta Planning + Design, June 2014.

This Plan includes five priority areas selected by the BPAC based on project need (safety and connectivity), PSI scoring, geographic equity, design repeatability and the desire to implement a signature project. The five priority projects are listed below.

Top Five Priority Projects		
Location/Corridor	Treatment(s)	Cost Estimate
Springer Road and El Monte Avenue	Intersection reconfiguration	\$165,230
Cuesta Drive, San Antonio Road/1 <sup>st</sup> Street to Springer Road	Intersections reconfiguration and sidewalk gap closures	\$836,212
Miramonte Road, Alegre Avenue to Loraine Avenue	Shared Use Path/Trail	\$952,418
Grant Road, Homestead Road to Grant Road	Shared Use Path/Trail	\$749,710
El Monte Ave Concept Plan	Intersections reconfiguration and sidewalk gap closures	\$1,071,265

## Priority Programs

Chapter 6: Recommended Programs presents many programmatic recommendations for Los Altos, falling under the categories of education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. A priority list of the Top 10 programs is listed below, developed through input from the community, the BPAC, and City staff.

Priority Recommended Programs			
Title	Steps	Priority Level	Cost Estimate
<b>Safe Routes to School Program</b>			
Walk or Wheels	Continue to support the Walk or Wheels (WoW) Program or similar programs that encourage students to walk or bike or to school	High	\$4,000
Promote Suggested Routes	Promote the updated suggested routes to school maps that include suggested routes, crossing locations, traffic controls, and crossing guard locations along routes to each school	High	\$1,000
Appendix E	Promote and implement the additional programmatic recommendations from Appendix E	High	\$100,000
<b>Walk to Work Programs</b>			
City Employee Alternative Commute Modes	Actively promote alternative commute modes for City employees	High	\$14,000
<b>Walk Friendly Community Designation</b>			
Walk Friendly Community	Consider applying to this program to demonstrate dedication to improving the pedestrian environment.	High	\$5,000
<b>Traffic Safety Campaign</b>			
Traffic Safety Program	Consider implementation of a traffic safety program such as StreetsSmarts	High	\$30,000
<b>Targeted Police Enforcement</b>			

Targeted Enforcement Strategies	Coordinate with the Police Department to continue its existing targeted enforcement strategies to increase the safety of pedestrians in Los Altos	High	\$18,000
<b>Speed Feedback Signs</b>			
Mobile Speed Feedback	The City should work with the Police Department and Public Works to continue operations of mobile speed feedback signs	High	\$30,000
<b>Annual Pedestrian Counts and Survey Program</b>			
Pedestrian Counts and Survey	Conduct an annual pedestrian community survey and an annual pedestrian count program	High	\$3,000
Report Card	Produce an annual report or 'report card' on walking. Annual reports developed from count and survey efforts can help the City measure its success toward the goals of this Plan as well rate the overall quality or effectiveness of the ongoing efforts to increase walking in the City	High	\$10,000

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