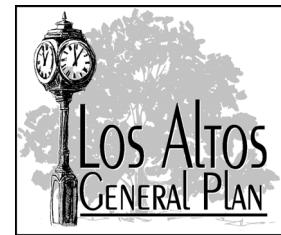


# INFRASTRUCTURE & WASTE DISPOSAL ELEMENT

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Purpose of the Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element           | 1 |
| Scope and Content of the Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element | 1 |
| Related Laws, Plans and Programs                                 | 1 |
| Relationship to Other General Plan Elements                      | 2 |

### INFRASTRUCTURE & WASTE DISPOSAL PLAN

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Water Supply             | 3 |
| Water Quality            | 3 |
| Sewer Service            | 3 |
| Drainage                 | 3 |
| Utilities                | 4 |
| Solid Waste Disposal     | 4 |
| Hazardous Waste Disposal | 4 |

### ISSUES, GOALS AND POLICIES

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Water Supply         | 5 |
| Sewer Service        | 5 |
| Drainage             | 6 |
| Utilities            | 7 |
| Solid Waste Disposal | 7 |

### IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS APPENDIX

# INFRASTRUCTURE & WASTE DISPOSAL ELEMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

The Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element addresses the community need for water and sewer facilities and services, drainage, utilities, and solid waste disposal. The types and levels of facilities and services provided express the City's response to community desires and needs. The goals, policies, and programs of this chapter serve as guidelines in the on-going provision of facilities and services.

## PURPOSE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE & WASTE DISPOSAL ELEMENT

The Los Altos Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element is an optional element under California law, rather than a mandatory element of the General Plan. The purpose of the Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element is to ensure sufficient quality and levels of service for water, sewer, utilities, and solid waste.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE & WASTE DISPOSAL ELEMENT

The Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element is comprised of four sections: 1) Introduction; 2) the Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Plan; 3) Issues, Goals and Policies; and 4) Implementation Programs Appendix. The 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 related to the provision of water, sewer, utilities, and solid waste are identified and related goals and policies are established to address these issues. The goals, which are overall statements of

community desires, are comprised of broad statements of purpose and direction. The policies serve as guides for working with local and regional agencies protecting and maintaining these services and facilities at sufficient levels. The General Plan Implementation Programs Appendix identifies specific implementation programs for the Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element.

## RELATED LAWS, PLANS AND PROGRAMS

A number of existing plans and programs exist which directly relate to the goals of the Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element. Enacted through state and local action, these plans and programs are administered by agencies with responsibility for their enforcement.

### ***California Environmental Quality Act***

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted by the state legislature in response to a public mandate for a thorough environmental analysis of projects that might adversely affect the environment. The provisions of the law, review procedure and any subsequent analysis are described in the CEQA Statutes and Guidelines as amended in 1998. Water quality and utility and service systems are recognized as environmental impacts under CEQA.

### ***Integrated Waste Management Plan***

The California Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939) of 1989 changed the focus of solid waste management from landfill to diversion strategies such as source reduction, recycling, and composting. The purpose of the diversion strategies is to reduce dependence on landfills for solid waste disposal. AB 939 required a 25 percent reduction in the solid waste stream by 1995



and a 50 percent reduction by 2000. Santa Clara County has adopted an Integrated Waste Management Plan to implement these state requirements. Los Altos has achieved these waste reduction goals.

#### **Regional Water Quality Control Board**

The federal Clean Water Act requires regional agencies to carry out water quality planning in metropolitan areas, which include control measures for improving water quality and institutional and financial mechanisms to implement the control measures for municipal and industrial wastewater, storm runoff, and similar sources. All permits for liquid waste discharge must be consistent with the plan.

The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requires permits for point source pollution, such as that from sewage treatment plants, as well as non-point source pollution introduced by water runoff into streams, storm drains, and sewer systems. Although NPDES permitting is the responsibility of the State Water Resources Control Board and the regional boards, the nature of non-point source pollution practically necessitates local participation if pollution runoff is to be minimized.

#### **Watercourse Protection Regulations**

Los Altos adopted regulations to protect the City's watercourses by requiring the maintenance of waterways to keep them free of debris, excessive vegetation and other obstacles that have the potential to pollute, contaminate, or significantly retard water flow.

#### **Hazardous Waste Management Plan**

The Santa Clara County Hazardous Waste Management Plan provides basic policy direction to address current and future hazardous waste management issues.

#### **Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD)**

Through its ordinances, the SCVWD seeks to protect surface water quality and groundwater quality.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS**

According to state planning law, the Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element must be consistent with the other General Plan elements. All of the elements are interdependent, as well as interrelated. Certain goals and policies of one element may also address issues that are primary subjects of other elements. This integration of issues throughout the General Plan creates a strong basis for the implementation of plans and programs and achievement of community goals. The Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element is most directly related to the Land Use and Open Space, Conservation & Community Facilities Elements.





## INFRASTRUCTURE & WASTE DISPOSAL PLAN

High quality municipal water and sewer service is necessary to protect public health in urban settings. Ensuring adequate service is essential for creating a healthy and vital environment for residents and businesses within the City. This section of the Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element identifies the City's approach to providing those services. The Plan is based on goals and policies identified in the subsequent section of this Element.

### WATER SUPPLY

All domestic and commercial water in Los Altos is supplied by the California Water Service Company, and financially supported by user fees. Currently, 28 percent of the City's water comes from well water and 72 percent comes from Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) sources, which include underground aquifers, reservoirs, and the San Joaquin-Sacramento River Delta. The City does not anticipate a significant increase in water demand and the SCVWD has not identified any substantial concerns with water resources.

### WATER QUALITY

The General Groundwater Quality Monitoring Program allows the District to evaluate the status of groundwater quality, track changes, and identify areas of concern. Water drawn from underground aquifers may be susceptible to pollutants originating at industrial sites in neighboring cities and transported through the aquifer. The water from these wells is therefore treated and examined periodically to ensure its safety and potability.

The California Water Supply Company's Water Quality Report for the year 2000 identified compliance with all primary standards relative to contaminants and secondary standards relative to taste, odor, and appearance.

### SEWER SERVICE

With the exception of a few homes with septic systems, the City's sewer system serves all development within Los Altos, adjacent unincorporated areas within the "urban service area", and a portion of Los Altos Hills. Since 1972, the City has contracted with the City of Palo Alto for sewage treatment at the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant.

The City's contract is for 3.6 million gallons a day (MGD) of treatment, which will accommodate future development of vacant sites and the intensification of commercial areas in accordance with the Land Use Element.

The typical design life of a wastewater facility is 50 years. The Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant was designed in 1969 to serve the wastewater management needs of Palo Alto, Los Altos, Mountain View, East Palo Alto, Los Altos Hills, and Stanford through the year 2020. While the existing plant serves Los Altos for the life of this Plan, the plant is now being planned for a future beyond that period. The City will participate in that plan as a stakeholder.

### DRAINAGE

To reduce pollutants in urban runoff, the City requires new development projects and substantial rehabilitation projects to incorporate best management practices (BMPs) pursuant to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) and Santa Clara County master Drainage Plan. The city also engages in these practices through activities such as storm drain maintenance and erosion control.



## UTILITIES

Los Altos has adequate utilities for urban development. Natural gas and electricity are provided by Pacific Gas & Electric Company, telephone service is provided by Pacific Bell Telephone, and cable television is provided by AT&T Broadband. New development is required to provide verification of utility service availability at the time of development.

## SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 was enacted to reduce, recycle, and reuse solid waste generated in the state. Specifically, the Act required cities and counties to identify measures to divert 25 percent of the total solid waste stream from landfill disposal by the year 1995 and 50 percent by the year 2000. The state has continued to refine program goals and work toward preserving land resources for productive uses, not landfills.

Los Altos has been able to meet these waste reduction goals by conducting a residential curbside recycling program and participating in applicable programs of the Santa Clara County Integrated Waste Management Program to implement state requirements. Permitting, inspections, and monitoring of solid waste facilities and equipment is performed by the County Solid Waste Local Enforcement Agency. This agency also handles investigations related to illegal storage, dumping, and disposal of solid wastes.

There are no existing or planned solid waste facilities within the Los Altos planning area. Rather, the Los Altos waste stream is collected by a franchised hauler and transferred to Newby Island landfill in San Jose.

## HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL

Hazardous materials are identified in the Natural Environment & Hazards Element of the Plan. Hazardous waste generators and users in the City are required to comply with regulations enforced by several federal, state, and county agencies. The regulations are designed to reduce risk associated with human exposure to hazardous materials and minimize adverse environmental effects.

To ensure that commercial and residential activities involving classified hazardous substances are properly handled, contained, and disposed, the Santa Clara County Fire Department coordinates with the County's Hazardous Materials Compliance Division to implement the Santa Clara County Hazardous Waste Management Plan.





## ISSUES, GOALS AND POLICIES

Infrastructure and waste disposal are necessary to support urban development. Quality of life for Los Altans is directly related to how effectively these services are provided.

Five major issues are addressed by the goals, policies, and plan in the Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element. These major issues are:

- 1) Preserving and protecting water supply and quality;
- 2) Ensuring an adequate sewer system;
- 3) Providing an adequate drainage system;
- 4) Providing necessary utility systems; and
- 5) Ensuring adequate solid waste disposal.

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

### WATER SUPPLY

Los Altos receives all of its water from the California Water Service Company, which operates local wells, but imports the majority of domestic water. With water issues becoming more important throughout California, ensuring that its residents and businesses have access to adequate supplies of high quality water now and in the future is important. Water conservation is important to achieve this objective since conservation reduces the overall need for water by the community.

**Goal 1: Support the provision of clean, healthful water in quantities sufficient to satisfy current and projected domestic and commercial needs in Los Altos.**

**Policy 1.1:** Continue to work with California Water Services Company to ensure that the City's drinking water meets all federal and State water quality standards.

**Policy 1.2:** Ensure that the California Water Services Company meets the demand for water for the population anticipated within the Los Altos water service area, and that adequate pressure levels are maintained.

**Policy 1.3:** Review development proposals to determine whether adequate water pressure exists for existing and new development.

**Policy 1.4:** Continue to promote water conservation.

### SEWER SERVICE

The Los Altos Sewer System serves Los Altos a portion of Los Altos Hills, and adjacent unincorporated areas with the urban service area. The exception is an unincorporated pocket of about 20 homes which remain on septic systems. The City contracts for sewage treatment at the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant.

**Goal 2: Support the provision of sewage collection and treatment services to satisfy current and projected needs in Los Altos.**



**Policy 2.1:** Continue to work with the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant to ensure that adequate sewage treatment capacity is available to meet the needs of development in Los Altos.

**Policy 2.2:** Review development proposals to ensure that if a project is approved, adequate sewage collection and treatment capacity is available to support such proposals.

## DRAINAGE

Surface runoff from Los Altos is discharged into the City storm drainage system and local creeks that empty directly into the South San Francisco Bay. Both State and federal authorities have identified storm water runoff as a major source of pollution adversely affecting the beneficial uses of the Bay. New regulations and permitting processes have been adopted to help reduce sources of pollution that contribute to runoff pollution. The City plays an important role enforcing these regulations to reduce pollution caused by runoff.

### Goal 3: Abate non-point source water pollution.

**Policy 3.1:** Control surface runoff water discharges into the storm water system to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit and the receiving water limitations assigned by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

**Policy 3.2:** Establish non-point source pollution control measures and programs to attempt to reduce and control the discharge of pollutants into the City's storm drains and local creeks.

**Policy 3.3:** Minimize the amount of impervious surfaces and directly connected impervious surfaces in areas of new development and redevelopment and where feasible maximize on-site infiltration of storm water runoff.

**Policy 3.4:** Implement pollution prevention methods supplemented by pollutant source controls and treatment. Use small collection strategies located at, or as close as possible to the source (i.e., the point where water initially meets the ground) to minimize the transport or urban runoff and pollutants offsite.

**Policy 3.5:** Preserve, and where possible, create or restore areas that provide important water quality benefits, such as riparian corridors, wetlands, and buffer zones.

**Policy 3.6:** Limit disturbances of natural water bodies and natural drainage systems caused by development including roads, highways, and bridges.

**Policy 3.7:** Avoid development of areas that are particularly susceptible to erosion and sediment loss; or establish development guidance that identifies these areas and protects them from erosion and sediment loss.



## UTILITIES

Since Los Altos is mainly built-out, the infrastructure and utility system is generally complete. The major focus of the City's attention continues to be the on-going maintenance of the existing system and ensuring that improvements are made to meet the current and future needs of the community. The City also continues to review new development proposals to ensure that they provide additional infrastructure when necessary.

**Goal 4: Maintain adequate sewer, gas, water, electric power, and communications systems and facilities in Los Altos.**

- Policy 4.1:** Continue to work with infrastructure providers to ensure that the community's current and future infrastructure needs are met.
- Policy 4.2:** Maintain accurate records of infrastructure usage and needed infrastructure improvements.
- Policy 4.3:** Continue to require utilities in new developments to be placed underground.
- Policy 4.4:** Continue to investigate the feasibility of undergrounding existing overhead utilities and target areas for undergrounding.
- Policy 4.5:** Allow for the latest in communication technology for Los Altos that can be built in a way that retains the character of the constructed environment.

## SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

Solid and hazardous waste is transported from Los Altos to outside facilities for disposal since there is no appropriate location within the City for a waste disposal site. Due to the limited availability of new waste disposal sites within the region, finding ways to reduce the overall amount of waste generated, and thereby reducing the need for new disposal facilities, is important.

**Goal 5: Ensure long-term solid waste disposal capacity for Los Altos.**

- Policy 5.1:** Continue to explore alternative waste disposal options that are economically sound, operationally dependable, and environmentally acceptable.
- Policy 5.2:** Reduce the total volume of the solid waste stream.
- Policy 5.3:** Pursue waste disposal options in cooperation with neighboring cities.
- Policy 5.4:** Seek citizen input on solid waste disposal issues.



## IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS APPENDIX

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



## INFRASTRUCTURE & WASTE DISPOSAL

This Implementation Program provides actions to implement the adopted policies and plans identified in the Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element. The Infrastructure & Waste Disposal 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 Infrastructure & Waste Disposal Element.

### WATER AND SEWER

#### IWD 1: WATER AND SEWER SERVICE FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

For proposed development projects, require appropriate engineering studies to determine water and sewer infrastructure requirements. Require the recommendations of the studies to be incorporated into the design of projects. Early engineering studies will allow the City and water districts to anticipate water and sewer infrastructure impacts prior to development, and permit more time to plan required improvements. Require the dedication of necessary rights-of-way and construction of water and sewer infrastructure improvements for all development projects.

|                                |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Responsible Agency/Department: | Community Development, Public Works |
| Funding Source:                | Development fees                    |
| Time Frame:                    | Ongoing                             |
| Related Policies:              | 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2                  |

#### IWD 2: WATER SERVICE LIAISON

Work with the California Water Service Company to anticipate peak water demands and to coordinate public information systems during droughts. Establish liaison to monitor and ensure adequate water pressure levels throughout the City.

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Responsible Agency/Department: | Public Works, California Water Service Company |
| Funding Source:                | General Fund                                   |
| Time Frame:                    | Ongoing  |
| Related Policies:              | 1.1, 1.2                                       |

#### IWD 3: PROMOTE WATER CONSERVATION

Encourage water conservation in the following ways:

- 1) Encourage the Santa Clara Valley Water District to expand the production of reclaimed water, and work with the districts to develop new uses for reclaimed water;
- 2) Implement the City's Water Efficient Landscape Regulations Ordinance;
- 3) Work with Santa Clara Valley Water District and local school districts to establish water conservation educational programs; and



- 4) Request the incorporation of water conservation devices (including low-flush toilets, flow restriction devices and water conserving appliances) in new development, public projects and rehabilitation projects.

Responsible Agency/Department: Community Development, Public Works, Santa Clara Valley Water District

Funding Source: General Fund, development fees, local water district

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 1.4

#### IWD 4: EROSION CONTROL

Implement erosion and sediment control measures to reduce soil erosion and volume and velocity of surface runoff from construction sites.

Responsible Agency/Department: Community Development

Funding Source: General Fund, development fees, mitigation

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 3.7

#### UTILITIES

#### IWD 5: MONITOR SEWER CAPACITY

Monitor sanitary sewer capacity and issue a status report to the City Council on an annual basis.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works

Funding Source: General Fund, User fees

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 2.1

#### IWD 6: IMPROVE SURFACE WATER QUALITY

To reduce pollutants in urban runoff, require new development projects and substantial rehabilitation projects to incorporate Best Management Practices pursuant to the National Pollutant System Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) and the Santa Clara County Drainage Master Plan to ensure that the City complies with applicable State and federal regulations.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works

Funding Source: General Fund, State and Federal funding sources, development fees

Time Frame: Ongoing

Related Policies: 3.1-3.7



#### IWD 7: INFRASTRUCTURE BUDGETING

Adopt and update (as needed) a long-range facilities plan and budget to fund maintenance and improvements. Review the plan bi-annually.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works  
Funding Source: General Fund, Development fees, User fees  
Time Frame: Annual  
Related Policies: 4.1, 4.2

#### IWD 8: POWER AND COMMUNICATION SERVICE FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

Require appropriate studies to be prepared for proposed development projects to determine requirements for natural gas, electricity, telephone and cable infrastructure. Review the recommendations of the studies to be incorporated into the design of projects. Require the dedication of necessary rights-of-way for all development projects.

Responsible Agency/Department: Community Development, Public Works, Service Providers  
Funding Source: Development fees  
Time Frame: Ongoing  
Related Policies: 4.1

### SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

#### IWD 9: RECYCLING

Continue and enhance the City's recycling program in accordance with requirements of the State Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939) and the Santa Clara County Integrated Waste Management Plan.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works, Santa Clara County, Association of Bay Area Governments  
Funding Source: General Fund  
Time Frame: Ongoing  
Related Policies: 5.1, 5.2

#### IWD 10: SOLID WASTE TECHNOLOGY

Monitor waste disposal planning activities of neighboring communities and keep abreast of current waste disposal technologies.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works  
Funding Source: General Fund  
Time Frame: Ongoing  
Related Policies: 5.3



**IWD 11: SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL EDUCATION**

Continue to develop and enhance a public awareness program regarding solid waste disposal issues.

Responsible Agency/Department: Public Works  
Funding Source: General Fund, Franchise fees, solid waste charges  
Time Frame: Ongoing  
Related Policies: 5.1, 5.2, 5.4