

ANNEX 1

CHAPTER 2 TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

The Town of Los Altos Hills is an incorporated town located on the west side of the Santa Clara Valley northwest of San Jose, and bordered to the north by Palo Alto and the south by Cupertino (Figure 1-2.1). The population in 2010 was 7,922, with a population density of 900 people per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

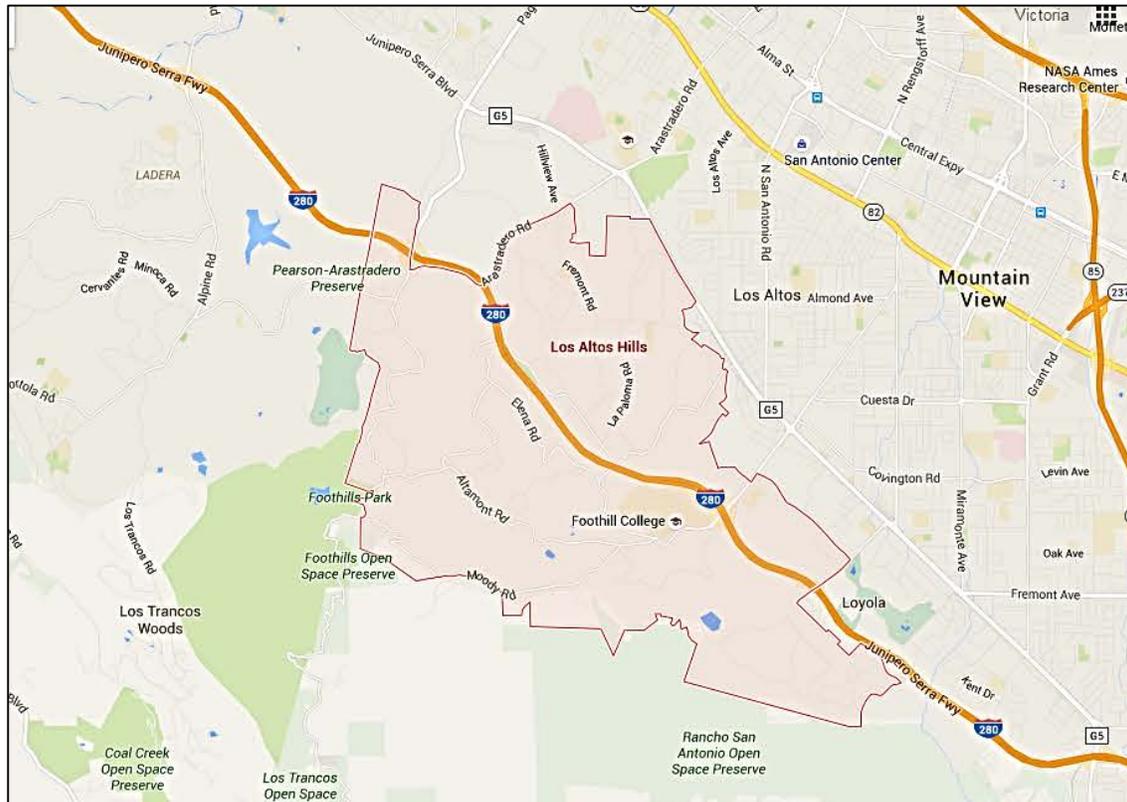


Figure 1-2.1. Town of Los Altos Hills.

ORGANIZATION AND JURISDICTION

The Town of Los Altos Hills is governed by a publicly elected town council and has authority for General Plan-land use planning, code adoption, and permit processing.

The Town of Los Altos Hills does not have a town fire department. Fire protection services are provided by the Los Altos Hills County Fire District (Annex 4), (a Board of Supervisors-governed dependent special district) that also provides fire protection to the unincorporated area west of the town.

WUI AREA AND CODES AND ORDINANCES

Los Altos Hills has a ban on commercial zones, with the only retail operation being a bookstore on the campus of Foothill College. The town's zoning regulations require a minimum lot size of 1 acre (4,000 m²), setbacks from the property boundary, and easements for public pathways. Landowners are limited to one primary dwelling per lot, effectively banning multifamily housing.

State law designates all lands within the city limits of Los Altos Hills as an LRA for purposes of wildland fire protection. Most state fire prevention and defensible space laws do not apply within LRA. Recent legislation requires State review and input on General Plan Safety Element updates where wildland fire is a hazard (Government Code Section 65040.20).

The planning area is best described as a wildland-urban intermix with homes scattered amongst wildland fuels.

Designated WUI areas require application of Chapter 7A WUI regulations of the Town's adopted Building Code.

Buildings that fall within the Town of Los Altos Hills are subject to Town land use/building permit policies and ordinances:

Los Altos Hills Municipal Code: <http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/199/Municipal-Code>

Tree removal permit: <http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/295/Tree-Removal-Permit>

Tree fencing requirements: <http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/181>

A landscape design plan for projects in fire-prone areas shall address fire safety and prevention. Avoid fire-prone plant materials and highly flammable mulches. Refer to the local Fuel Modification Plan guidelines (guidelines from a local fire authority to assist residences and businesses that are developing land or building structures in an FHSZ). To prevent the likelihood or severity of wildfires, create a 30-foot fuel break area around your home using vegetation that has low flammability and is low growing. Remove dead plants and clean out dead material from your living plants in such a way so that it does not accelerate erosion and flood potential. Trees should be kept a distance from any structure at least as wide as the mature crown. Additionally, large shrubbery under trees can create a fire ladder allowing the flames to ignite the tree foliage. Pines, junipers, cypress and eucalyptus trees burn especially fast and should not be planted near the house.

LAND USE PLANNING, GENERAL PLAN, BUILDING CODES, AND LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLANS

Authority and jurisdiction for approving the General Plan and elements, determining land use, community design and building code adoption rests with the Los Altos Hills City Council. The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) identifies hazards that exist in Los Altos Hills that create risk to citizens and properties in Saratoga. WUI fires are a real and present danger to the western portions of the Town. This CWPP identifies several goals related to functions the Town of Los Altos Hills has the authority to undertake (Table 1-2.1).

This CWPP may serve as basis for the WUI fire component for LHMP, General Plan, or General Plan element updates.

MITIGATION PROJECTS AND PRIORITIZATIONS

Table 1-2.1. Recommendations for General Planning Projects in Town of Los Altos Hills

ID	Project Description	Method	Timeline for Action	Priority (1,2,3)	Monitoring/Sustainability	Resources/Funding Sources Available
Strategic Goal GP1: Ensure project sustainability.						
LAH-GP1.1	The CWPP serves as the wildfire component of Los Altos Hills Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and General Plan - Safety and other element amendments.	Work with city planning to identify timeline for incorporation in next LHMP update. Aim to have the strategic-level CWPP incorporated into the Safety Element of the General Plan when the safety element is next revised. Getting it into the General Plan is equivalent to getting the CWPP adopted.	Next 5 years	2	The core group of stakeholders would need to ensure that the document is kept relevant in that time and position it for incorporation.	Internal funding
Strategic Goal GP1: Ensure project sustainability.						
LAH-GP1.1	Ensure project sustainability.	Have a target date for updating the datasets used in the risk assessment model and re-running the model. Establish trigger points for updating CWPP. Make contact with Santa Clara County Fire Department to note your interest in participating in the project and identify CWPP meeting schedule.	Annually	1	Establish annual oversight of the CWPP and project status. Get buy-in from Core Team members for long-term commitment to CWPP review.	Internal funding
LAH-GP1.2	Designate a member to the Countywide CWPP Core Team for CWPP updates.	Identify staff and convene a kickoff of the working group and identify tasks and goals for CWPP updates.	Meet quarterly	1	Commit to attendance at one CWPP meeting annually.	Internal funding
LAH-GP1.3	Develop methods for sustainability of hazardous fuel reduction.	Develop action for city council to adopt method to fund sustainable hazardous fuel maintenance (such as Mello-Roos Community Facility Districts for new subdivisions).	As needed	2	Enactment of policy.	Internal funding

*Santa Clara County Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Annex 1. Santa Clara County Central Fire Protection District – Chapter 2*

ID	Project Description	Method	Timeline for Action	Priority (1,2,3)	Monitoring/Sustainability	Resources/Funding Sources Available
Strategic Goal GP2: Parcel Level Defensible Space Inspection Task Force						
LAH-GP2.1	Join countywide task force to do parcel level inspection work to enhance model; utilize portable data collection and ArcGIS as analysis tools.	Carryout parcel level assessments to enhance risk assessment model components at a finer scale. Add data to model and re-run as necessary.	2 years	1	Set target number of parcels to be assessed each year. Review number of parcels assessed each year at annual CWPP meeting.	Internal funding
Strategic Goal GP3: Develop countywide standard and method for continued data gathering and risk analysis.						
LAH-GP3.1	Use a countywide standard and method for continued data gathering and risk analysis.	Conduct funding to purchase a commercial application, such as Fulcrum, that provides a standard data collection platform that could be used on a smart phone/tablet.	2 years	1	Annual review of progress as part of Core Team.	California Fire Safe Council clearinghouse grants; internal funding
Strategic Goal GP5: Add hyperspectral and LiDAR imaging to periodic aerial photography flights.						
LAH-GP5.1	Seek LiDAR and hyperspectral imagery for aerial photography of Los Altos Hills.	Work in conjunction with the City Planning, County Assessor, or others to add additional sensing cameras to aerial photo flights. Hyperspectral and LiDAR can provide in depth identification and analysis of hazards and risks.	1–3 years	1	Periodic new flights to update data sets.	Grants: Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, Greenhouse Gas Reduction

For other mitigation actions within the Los Altos Hills WUI, please refer to the Los Altos Hills County Fire District Annex 4.