PATHWAYS ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

101. The Town's pathways system serves four basic and important functions:

- Circulation throughout the community
- Safe access and emergency routes
- Outdoor recreation/fitness
- Preservation of the open character of the Town

The pathways system is designed to complement the Town's roadway system and to enhance non-motorized circulation by providing connections between neighborhoods and access to local or nearby destinations. The Pathways Element is an optional element of the General Plan. However, it is closely related to several mandatory elements including the Circulation & Scenic Roadways Element, the Safety Element, and the Open Space & Recreation Element.

Pathways offer an alternative mode of travel through Town.

Roadside Paths

102. The Town's pathways system is composed of roadside paths and off-road paths. Roadside paths are located within or adjacent to the road right-of-way. The road right-of-way is generally planned to have the needed width to accommodate both the paved road as well as a separated path. Roadside paths provide safe routes for pedestrians and equestrians in the Town, much as sidewalks function in more urban communities. Roadside paths separate the car and the pedestrian or other non-vehicular user, and allow each a safer movement. The hills of the Town result in streets that often have steep sections or blind curves, which make pedestrian separation more important than with a grid street system.

Off-road Paths

103. Off-road paths provide links between adjacent neighborhoods and schools for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians. Off-road paths, which connect to roadside paths or open space lands, are generally located on dedicated easements on private property (usually along property lines), through public lands, or through privately owned conservation/open space easements. Off-road paths make it possible to travel by foot or horseback to nearby neighborhoods without using Town roads.

Recreational Functions

104. In addition to providing access to nearby destinations, paths provide a place to exercise, walk dogs, or ride horses. The primary users and beneficiaries of most of these paths are local residents. Path-related recreational activities such as walking, jogging, hiking and

horseback riding are among the most popular and rapidly growing forms of outdoor recreation as the public is becoming increasingly more health and fitness conscious.

105. Pathways are frequently constructed of pervious materials to maintain the Town's open and rural setting, and to further enhance the recreational experience. Both the recreational and circulation functions of the paths will become even more important as their popularity and the demand for recreational opportunities increase.

History of Pathways

106. Even before the Town was incorporated in 1956, the pathways system began to develop unofficially as a network of trails throughout the community. Over the years, as new subdivisions developed and the population increased, the use of paths and their popularity increased. The pathways system was formalized when the Town incorporated, and paths expanded incrementally as development occurred and the population grew. Regulations were established to require each new development that adds potential new pathway users to contribute to the pathways system through the dedication of easements and the construction of paths or payment of pathway fees. Pathway fees are used by the Town for improvement and maintenance of the pathways system.

Local paths provide passage to wander over and to explore the natural areas of the Town and provide the inter-connecting strands of the web that help bind the community together.

From the 1981 Pathways Element

Implementing the Master Path Plan

107. The pathways system is and remains a work in progress. Implementation of the Master Path Plan through the acquisition of easements and the construction and maintenance of individual paths will take many years to accomplish because paths are generally constructed one segment at a time as new development occurs. In most cases, the acquisition of pathway easements occurs during subdivision or site development review, although in some cases easements have been acquired through voluntary contribution. Construction of pathways is usually performed by property owners as a condition of approval for site development or by the Town as a capital improvement project. The incremental nature of the process makes it critical that the Town has a clear and equitable policy regarding the acquisition of easements, payment of pathway fees, and construction and maintenance of pathways.

Key Terms

The terms "path" and "trail" are used interchangeably, although trail usually refers to a path (or pathway) in a more natural condition or setting.

Regional Connection

108. The pathways system of the Town is intended primarily for the use of Town residents but it should be connected to the path and trail systems of neighboring jurisdictions.

- Palo Alto
  The Town and Palo Alto pathways along Arastradero Road provide links from the Town to Arastradero Preserve, to Esther Clark Park via Fremont Road, Old Trace Lane, and Aric Lane trails, and to Gunn High School via Palo Alto trails. It would be very desirable if Foothill Park (City of Palo Alto) trails were also accessible from Town paths along Page Mill Road, also allowing for connection to the Skyline Trail.

- Los Altos
  Access from and to Shoup Park and Redwood Grove in Los Altos, along Adobe Creek to O'Keefe Lane and the Town's pathway system, and a link between Fremont Road and Redwood Grove would improve pedestrian access for both cities.

- Open Space Preserves
  The western boundary of the Town meets Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, which is owned and operated by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. This Preserve has an extensive trail system that attracts large numbers of visitors. The primary entrance to the Preserve, where extensive parking is available, is at Rancho San Antonio County Park at the end of Cristo Del Rey Drive in Cupertino. Connections to the Preserve from the Town are intended for local residents and have limited parking. Improved access to open space lands should also be pursued.

De Anza Trail

109. The De Anza Trail, which Congress has designated as a national historic trail, passes through Town. It is expected that the historic trail will be designed and completed in the future, and the trail should be designated on the Master Path Plan at that time.

Historic De Anza Trail

The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail is a historic route from Nogales, Arizona to San Francisco, California. The trail commemorates the 1775-1776 Spanish Expedition, in which Captain de Anza led almost 300 people over 1,200 miles to settle Alta California. The trail was the first overland route to connect New Spain with San Francisco.

THE PATHWAYS SYSTEM

GOAL 1

Develop and maintain a safe, convenient pathways system that allows non-vehicular travel throughout Town, meets recreational needs of residents, and provides regional connections.

Policy 1.1 All residents of the Town shall have immediate access adjacent to or across the street from their residence to a pathway or pathways, for safe and convenient pedestrian and other non-vehicular travel along Town roads and to schools and community facilities, and for recreational enjoyment of the natural amenities of the community.

Policy 1.2 Pathways shall serve to provide access to and from neighborhoods in the event of an emergency.

Policy 1.3 Pathways shall be separated from the roadway pavement wherever possible and meander where necessary to accommodate topography, trees and landscaping.

Policy 1.4 All paths shall be located and designed to preserve the beauty and natural character of the area and to safeguard the user.

Policy 1.5 Except for connections to regional trail and bikeway networks, Town paths shall be designed primarily for local circulation and recreational use.

Policy 1.6 The Town shall maintain the pathways, using both pathway fees and General Fund monies.

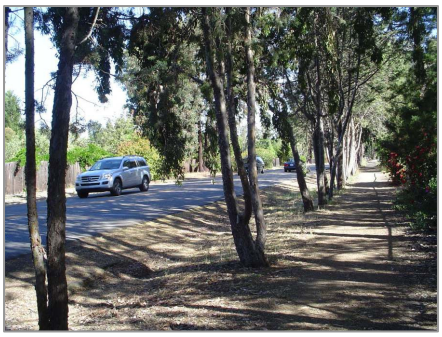
The annual Pathways Run is a popular event.

ROADSIDE PATHS

GOAL 2

Develop and maintain a system of roadside paths adjacent to public and private streets.

Policy 2.1 Roadside paths shall be located within or immediately adjacent to the right-of-way of Town streets and on separate pathway easements adjacent to or over private streets. Roadside paths shall be separated from the roadway pavement by landscape buffering and shall meander, where possible.



Landscaping separates this path from Fremont Road.

Policy 2.2 The Town Council shall adopt a list of those streets or segments of those streets that shall be planned for paths on both sides of the street. (The approved list is included in Appendix A.)

Policy 2.3 A roadside path shall be maintained on only one side of the street unless the street is included on the list adopted pursuant to Policy 2.2. The path may be located on alternating sides of the street, however, depending on factors such as available easements, topography, or proximity to schools or other facilities. If only one side of the street is in Los Altos Hills, there should be a path on the side within the Town's corporate limits.

Policy 2.4 Typically, a roadside path shall not be maintained on a cul-de-sac that serves or could serve eight or fewer lots. However, a roadside path along a cul-de-sac may be required by the Planning Commission or Council for topographic or safety reasons, and shall be required where it would connect to an off-road path.

Policy 2.5 The Planning Commission or City Council may require that an easement separate from a private street be dedicated, or that a pathway easement over the paved roadway be granted (if feasible), when the width of a private street easement of right-of-way will not accommodate both the paved surface and a separate path.

Policy 2.6 Dedication of pathway easements outside of required road rights-of-way shall not affect the computation of the net area, LUF (lot unit factor), MDA (maximum development area) or MFA (maximum floor area) for a lot.

OFF-ROAD PATHS

GOAL 3

Develop and maintain a system of off-road paths that provide connections between neighborhoods and direct routes to schools and open space preserves.

Policy 3.1 Off-road paths shall be located on private property on easements that have been dedicated to the Town, or over public lands. They shall provide connections between neighborhoods and provide direct routes to schools and open space. Cul-de-sacs should have off-road paths that connect the end of the street to adjoining neighborhoods whenever possible.

Policy 3.2 There shall be three classes of Off-Road Paths:

Class 1—Off-road paths for which easements have been granted to the Town for a completed route, on which a path has been developed or pathway use has been established, and which is maintained by the Town and is open for public use.

Class 2—Off-road paths for which easements have been granted to the Town for less than a completed route, or where the pathway easement exists but the path has not been constructed or maintained and is not open for public use. Such paths remain to be completed in the future.

Class 3—A planned future off-road path, as shown in the Master Path Plan. These paths may need dedication of easements over a single large parcel of land, or may require easements over a number of smaller parcels.

Policy 3.3 Off-road paths shall be a permitted use in conservation and open space easements, and should be reflected as such in the language of the easement agreement at the time of dedication.

Policy 3.4 Whenever possible, the Town shall require the dedication of easements for off-road paths along designated emergency routes.

Policy 3.5 The design of new subdivisions—especially those with cul-de-sac streets—shall incorporate pathway connections to nearby neighborhoods or community facilities, such as schools, and to open space areas.

Policy 3.6 Dedication of off-road pathway easements shall not affect the computation of the net area, LUF (lot unit factor), MDA (maximum development area) or MFA (maximum floor area) for a lot.

Policy 3.7 Off-road paths shall be maintained in as natural a state as possible, except that installed surfaces may be acceptable when paths serve as connectors to schools or neighborhoods, or where special use or topography make it necessary.

Policy 3.8 Off-road paths shall be located along or as close to property lines as possible.

THE MASTER PATH PLAN

GOAL 4

Maintain and implement the Master Path Plan
to ensure development of the Town's pathways system.

Policy 4.1 The Master Path Plan shall consist of all of the following:

a. A book of street maps of the Town showing streets with paths planned on both sides of the street, after adoption by the City Council (see Policy 2.2).

b. A book of street maps of the Town showing the side of each street on which a roadside path is planned. Determination of which side of a street the path should be located and type of construction shall be made by the Planning Commission, with the advice of the Pathways Committee and the City Engineer, at the time of subdivision approval or site development approval. The book of street maps shall also show the status of roadside paths for cul-de-sacs and private streets, in accordance with Policies 2.4 and 2.5.

c. A book of street maps of the Town showing the location of Class 1 off-road paths.

d. A book of street maps of the Town showing the location of Class 2 off-road paths. The Pathways Committee will review from time to time these paths to determine the status of their development and to recommend actions to convert Class 2 paths to Class 1 paths.

e. A map to be developed by the Pathways Committee and approved by the City Council showing future needed off-road paths. Such a map, upon adoption, will identify Class 3 paths.

In addition to or in lieu of the documents required above, the Town may display the Master Path Plan through other mapping or computer data bases for public and staff use.

Policy 4.2 At the time of subdivision or site development approval, property owners may be required to dedicate easements and/or construct paths on their property. Owners of property on which no path is needed shall contribute to completion of the pathways system by the payment of a pathway fee. The pathway fee shall be established by Town ordinance. Paths shall be constructed by property owners as site development occurs. In some cases, the Town may construct paths as funding permits.

Policy 4.3 All new development which is expected to result in an increased demand for use of pathways shall comply with requirements for non-vehicular access, including dedication of easements and/or construction of paths, or payment of pathway fees, as follows:

a. All subdivision development (except for lot line adjustments) shall be required to comply with pathway requirements, as the project would result in an increase in the number of homes (and residents) in the Town.

b. All proposals for new main residences and/or secondary dwelling shall be required to comply with pathway requirements, as the project would result in an increase in the number of residents in the Town.

c. A cumulative development of 900 square feet of habitable floor area or greater shall be required to comply with pathway requirements, as 900 square feet is considered a major addition requiring Planning Commission discretionary review; is generally the size of a large master bedroom and bathroom suite or three smaller bedrooms, based on typical submittals to the Town; and is roughly equivalent to the average area of floor space per Town resident, resulting in an increase (presently or in the future) in the number of residents in the Town.

d. Development of a barn or stables in excess of 900 square feet shall be required to comply with pathway requirements, as the project would generate additional stable capacity and place an increased burden on the equestrian use of pathways.

e. Other types of development proposals, such as conditional use permits or variances, shall require finding by the Town that justify the nexus for pathway requirements for that particular project.

Policy 4.4 Where pathway installation is required for a project, construction of the path shall occur concurrent with development of the project, unless the Planning Commission or Council determine that the path would serve no useful purpose in the near future, due to the incompleteness of the pathway segment.

Policy 4.5 A lot that contributed a pathway fee at the time of subdivision shall not be required to contribute again at the time of initial site development.

Policy 4.6 Pathway fees shall be deposited in a designated fund and used only for pathway projects.

Policy 4.7 The incremental development of the pathways system sometimes results in gaps in both the roadside and off-road pathways. Public funds available to the Town, including the pathway fees, shall be used on projects that will complete the gaps in the system.

Policy 4.8 Pathway standards shall be adopted by resolution of the City Council to address roadside and off-road pathway design.

Policy 4.9 Site development authorities shall be sensitive to path location and design. This is especially the case for the off-road paths. The location shall be sensitive to the privacy of future residents whenever a parcel is subdivided or a lot is developed. All paths shall be located and designed to preserve the beauty and natural

character of the area and to safeguard the user. Particular care shall be given to retaining trees and vegetative cover and to minimize grading and erosion.

Policy 4.10 Typically, off-road paths shall be located along property lines, when topography permits. Fencing along paths may sometimes be appropriate to protect privacy, so long as it does not intrude into easements or right-of-way.

Policy 4.11 Street trees along the roadside path system should be promoted to enhance the pathway experience, but shall be located to avoid conflict with path use.

Policy 4.12 Property owners who damage paths on their property shall be required to repair them. Damage can occur by landscaping planted too close to the path, sprinklers near the path, slippery driveway surfaces across a path, or disking too close to the path.

Policy 4.13 Class 1 off-road paths shall have sign posts at their entrance to help residents locate them and feel free to use them.

Policy 4.14 Major off-road paths should be named as a way to encourage their use and to recognize historical entities associated with the Town or to honor Town residents who have contributed to the development of the system.

Policy 4.15 The Town shall accept offers of dedication of pathway easements made at the time of development and record them so that the future pathway right-of-way is identified.

Policy 4.16 The Town shall seek donations of pathway easements needed to complete gaps in the system. The Town shall assume the legal and engineering costs involved with the preparation of easement donations unrelated to development and should inform residents of possible tax advantages from easement dedication.

Policy 4.17 A Pathways Committee of residents interested in the pathways system shall be appointed by the Council. A major responsibility of the Committee shall be to suggest priorities for the Council and the City Manager regarding those paths most in need of maintenance or development. The Committee shall also be responsible for the maintenance and development of the Master Path Plan.

Policy 4.18 Property owners shall not block pathways or otherwise impede pathway use through the placement of fences, landscaping, irrigation, mailboxes, or any other means.

Policy 4.19 Provision for pathway crossings or bridges shall be made at appropriate locations, such as across creeks, and all roadway vehicular bridges shall be designed to incorporate pathway crossings.

Policy 4.20 Trails and paths shall be permitted uses in open space and conservation easements. These trails shall be constructed and maintained to minimize the environmental impact upon the area.

Policy 4.21 When a pathway crosses a driveway or walkway, the pathway surface shall take precedence to provide safe footing for equestrians and pedestrians. Where a paved surface is required, the crossing must be acceptable as a pathway, e.g., roughened.

Policy 4.22 The Town shall maintain a walking map available to residents that indicates all roadside and off-road paths that are passable.

Program 4.1 Continue to implement the Master Path Plan by requiring the dedication of easements, construction of pathways and/or payment of pathway fees as a condition of approval for subdivisions and site development permits.

Program 4.2 Continue to improve the Town's maintenance of constructed pathways.

Program 4.3 Review the approved list of streets that should have paths on both sides and update the list as necessary.

Program 4.4 Review the walking map on a regular basis and update the map as necessary.

Program 4.5 Develop, adopt and implement an ordinance that codifies pathway requirements and regulations.

A Unique Community Asset

The pathways system is a network of paths and trails that unite the community and provide a safe, convenient alternative to vehicular travel. Used by school children, walkers, runners, equestrians and bicyclists, the pathways system meets recreation and circulation needs of residents. Pathways also allow access to natural areas so that residents can better enjoy the community's scenic countrysides.

APPENDIX A

Approved List of Roads to Have Pathways on Both Sides

As per Resolution #38-96, the City Council of the Town of Los Altos Hills has determined that the streets listed below shall be planned with pathways on both sides of the street.

The following streets have sufficient traffic (auto, pedestrian and equestrian) to warrant paths on both sides. While desirable, there may be segments where creating the path is not economically feasible at this time. Nevertheless, the Town will take the easement and, should it become important, the Town will put in the path.

1. Fremont Road
2. El Monte Road from Summerhill Road to Stonebrook
3. Manuella Road from Fremont to Scarff
4. La Paloma Road from Fremont to Purissima Road
5. Concepcion Road from Fremont to Purissima Road
6. Purissima Road from Arastradero to Robleda Road
7. Page Mill Road
8. Altamont Road
9. Moody Road

Resolution #38-96 was passed and adopted by the City Council on May 15, 1996.