

Town of Los Altos Hills

City Council Special Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 10:00 A.M.

Council Chambers, 26379 Fremont Road, Los Altos Hills, California

Present: Mayor Bhateja, Councilmember Mok, Councilmember Swan, Vice Mayor Tyson, and Councilmember Tankha

Staff: Acting City Manager Cody Einfalt, Community Development Director Bradford, City Attorney Mattas, Public Works Director Kim, Finance Director Leung, and City Clerk Arika Birdsong-Miller

CALL TO ORDER (10:00 A.M.)

Mayor Bhateja called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Bhateja, Vice Mayor Tyson, Councilmember Mok, Councilmember Swan, and Councilmember Tankha were present.

1. STUDY SESSION ON CONCIL PRIORITY SETTING AND 2026-2027 WORK PLAN

Acting City Manager Einfalt opened the annual goal-setting session and noted that the Town had transitioned to a two-year work plan covering the remainder of the current year and the following year. He explained that the plan reflected input from staff, council members, and committees, and that the session aimed to prioritize goals within limited resources. He stated the process would be collaborative, with two opportunities for public comments, and that the goal was to reach consensus on updates to the work plan. Einfalt then introduced facilitator Dan Rich, a retired City Manager from the City of Mountain View, to outline the structure of the day's meeting.

Dan Rich thanked the Mayor and Council and stated that the goal-setting session was an important part of the policymaking process, emphasizing the need to turn goals into a plan within existing resource constraints. He reviewed the meeting agenda and noted there would be two opportunities for public comment, one anticipated around 11:00 a.m. and another after lunch. He explained that the agenda included several opportunities for Council discussion and potential additions or deletions to the proposed work plan and asked if there were any questions or changes to the agenda.

Mayor Bhateja asked for clarification on the timing of public comments, noting that the agenda did not clearly list times and that the meeting would be lengthy. Staff explained that suggested times were included in Attachment 6 to the staff report but had shifted due to the delayed start of the meeting. **Dan Rich** clarified that the first public comment period was originally scheduled for 10:45 a.m. and the second for 1:30 p.m., though both could occur earlier depending on the pace of the meeting.

Councilmember Tankha suggested allowing public comment at the beginning and end of the meeting in addition to the scheduled times to make it easier for residents to participate. Staff noted the intent of the scheduled comment periods was to allow the public to respond to Council discussions and prioritization later in the meeting. The Council expressed general agreement to allow additional opportunities for comment.

Mayor Bhateja then OPENED PUBLIC COMMENTS.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. **David Kehlet** introduced himself and addressed the potential revision of the town’s view ordinance on the EDPC work plan. He provided background, noting that a 2001 survey showed two-thirds of residents supported height restrictions, and that the ordinance was passed unanimously to provide a structured approach to neighbor view and tree disputes while minimizing town intervention.

Mr. Kehlet clarified that the ordinance maintains existing views but does not create new ones, and shared that his own negotiated solution with a neighbor was stalled due to repeated refusal of mediation. He suggested that revisions to the ordinance should only occur when a majority of residents support a change. As an alternative, he proposed creating a supplemental guide to the view ordinance, similar to Planning Department handouts for ADUs, to help residents resolve view and tree issues without formally revising the ordinance.

2. **Gerda Crystal** introduced herself and requested that the Council prioritize two items on the work plan. First, she asked for a clear statement of the rights of residents in annexed areas, including any exceptions to the “as-is” policy, to ensure residents understand implications before annexation. Second, she called for clarification of codes regarding views and trees, noting that long-term and new property owners interpret them differently, leading to conflicts over issues such as whether a view is pre-existing or a clear-cut view. She emphasized that only the Council could address these long-standing issues, which had been pending for 13 years.

3. **Carol Gottlieb** spoke on behalf of the History Committee, noting that a historical element of the General Plan, previously approved, was about three-quarters complete but stalled due to staff focusing on the housing element. She expressed concern that approved committee projects often lack dedicated funding, which hampers their completion. Ms. Gottlieb requested that the History Committee be allocated at least \$5,000 to cover small projects, including signage for the 250th anniversary of the De Anza Trek and reinstallation of bronze plates with explanatory text. She emphasized that even if the historical element cannot be finished immediately, it should remain on the work plan.

Mayor Bhateja asked Director Bradford for comments regarding the History Committee’s funding request. **Director Bradford** responded that the Community Development Department’s “beyond capacity” list includes a municipal code update for historic preservation, intended to align with the History Committee’s requested General Plan modifications. When asked about a specific dollar amount, Bradford stated that no amount had been associated with the historic preservation request; the funding question related only to a separate special event mentioned by the committee.

Mayor Bhateja CLOSED PUBLIC COMMENTS after confirming there were no requests on Zoom.

Dan Rich noted that there would be additional opportunities for public comment later in the meeting. He then asked if there were any changes, questions, or suggestions regarding the agenda and confirmed that the Council was ready to proceed. Rich reviewed the suggested ground rules, emphasizing engagement, respect, and being heard, noting that they were similar to those adopted two years ago. With no objections, he moved on to the guiding principles on page 11 of the staff report, highlighting the importance of prioritizing key goals within staff capacity constraints. He asked if there were any questions or additions, and confirmed the Council was comfortable with the guiding principles.

Mayor Bhateja raised a question about the two-year work plan, noting that some items might need to be completed sooner and asking how input could be provided on the relative timing of higher-priority items. **Dan Rich** explained that today’s session was focused on identifying projects and priorities, and that staff would return to a future meeting with specific milestones and timelines for final approval. **Acting City Manager Einfalt** confirmed that the internal work plan already includes dates broken down by quarter, and Council feedback on timing would be incorporated then. **Mayor Bhateja** acknowledged the explanation, and Mr. Rich then turned the discussion over to **Acting City Manager Einfalt** to review the previous work plan and the proposed updates, who concluded his presentation with a request for questions or comments.

Vice Mayor Tyson asked about the “beyond capacity” item on page one regarding the PRA software update, noting the significant workload involved. **City Clerk Birdsong-Miller** responded that, once properly implemented, the software would streamline the PRA process and reduce staff time, but that the initial implementation requires substantial effort.

Vice Mayor Tyson noted that the evaluation of the ALPR system on page two appeared to be something already decided. **Acting City Manager Einfalt** confirmed this, explaining that the item had been marked in progress, but the review had been completed, and asked the Council to point out any similar corrections as they reviewed the plan.

Vice Mayor Tyson noted confusion over repeated items in the work plan related to municipal code updates aligned with California state law, questioning why one appeared under “beyond capacity” and a similar one under the regular work plan. **Director Bradford** explained that the repetition reflects different milestones: some work is already in progress with the Planning Commission or committees, while the “beyond capacity” items are projects the staff has not yet had capacity to advance. **Mayor Bhateja** acknowledged the clarification, noting that although the phrasing might seem concerning, it is not a violation. **Director Bradford** gave an example involving firescaping and landscaping updates tied to fire hazard regulations, which require coordination between in-progress work and additional municipal code updates.

Councilmember Mok expressed confusion regarding the spreadsheets, noting a \$49,000 mandated budget listed for the City Manager’s Office and the estimated staff hours on the same page, which ranged from 10 to 30 hours per task. He observed that on subsequent sheets, many additional requests significantly increased the total hours, making it difficult to reconcile the work with the available budget. Mr. Mok asked if there was a way to better align or clarify the relationship between staff hours and budgeted resources.

Acting City Manager Einfalt explained that the estimated staff hours were a new addition to the work plan, replacing the previous qualitative “small, medium, large” designations, to give the Council a more quantitative sense of staff workload. **Councilmember Mok** suggested that instead of listing hours in the far-right column, it would be more helpful to show the estimated cost, since the left-hand column already shows the mandated budget in dollars. **Director Bradford** clarified that the left-hand column reflects mandatory or budgeted items, while the right-hand column shows estimated staff hours; combining these would give the total cost of completing each task. **Mr. Mok** requested that future reports show dollar amounts rather than hours, and **Mr. Bradford** agreed.

Councilmember Swan emphasized that knowing staff hours is essential for planning, since hours determine how many staff are needed, even if budgeted funds cover consultants or materials.

Councilmember Tankha noted that some estimated hours, such as 50 hours for a digital survey,

seemed inaccurate. **CM Einfalt** explained that the hour estimates were intended to show project size and staff workload, rather than precise budgeting. **Dan Rich** added that the estimates help gauge capacity, showing that small projects require far less staff effort than large ones, and help the Council weigh trade-offs. **Councilmembers Swan** and **Tankha** both agreed that both staff hours and budget are needed for planning, with Swan noting that some projects may be committee-driven and require minimal staff time. **CM Einfalt** confirmed that work done entirely by committees would have very little staff time associated.

Vice Mayor Tyson stated that he supported keeping the staff-hour estimates as presented, noting that the purpose was to understand staff capacity, while external costs were already shown separately. **Councilmember Mok** disagreed, arguing that converting hours to dollar amounts would make it easier for Council to compare projects and make decisions without additional calculations.

Mayor Bhateja acknowledged the differing views and noted the feedback for staff. He then offered several comments and questions while reviewing the work plan. He suggested that the proposed AI workshop could potentially be referred to the Technology Committee for input, given the committee's expertise. He also asked staff to provide additional information at a future meeting on items listed as beyond capacity or deprioritized, including whether they could be completed with additional staff time, increased budget, or outside consultants, so the Council could better understand available options.

Community Development Department Discussion

Mayor Bhateja asked why the heat pump rebate program had moved to the "beyond capacity" list. **Director Bradford** explained that staff prioritized mandated housing element work, which pushed some items down, but noted the rebate program is relatively small and could be moved back if prioritized by Council.

Councilmember Swan suggested prioritizing the heat pump rebates over the greenhouse gas inventory because rebates directly reduce emissions. Councilmember Tankha encouraged delegating more work to committees to reduce staff workload. **CM Einfalt** said staff would review project classifications with each committee after the meeting.

Mayor Bhateja also asked about "Density Solutions," which **Director Bradford** described as potential housing analysis work, and pointed out that a "Firewise landscaping update" listed as beyond capacity was a duplicate item already within capacity.

Finance Department Discussion

Mayor Bhateja asked about the finance section's fee study listed under "beyond capacity." **Finance Director Leung** clarified that this was a typo and should refer to an impact fee study, not the building permit fee study, which remains within capacity. Staff explained that impact fees are charges on new development to help fund infrastructure such as parks, drainage, pathways, or other capital projects.

Mayor Bhateja also asked about the item on maximizing financial system functions. **Director Leung** explained that some automation projects, such as accounts payable, payroll, and budget software, had already been completed, while others, like bank and cash reconciliation automation, were underway. Remaining automation efforts were listed as beyond capacity and would be clarified in the next version of the work plan.

Mayor further asked about financial policy updates related to uncollectible accounts and accounts receivable, suggesting these should be prioritized. Leung responded that some of those policies were already being worked on and would likely be moved above the line when the list is updated. **CM Einfalt**

added that the spreadsheet had evolved over several months, which caused some outdated information and confusion, and staff could return with clearer updates if needed.

Public Works Department Discussion

Mayor Bhateja reviewed several Public Works “beyond capacity” items and requested clarification.

- Community Fiber Installation: **Director Kim** said the reference to “January 2025 edition” was a typo and should read 2026, reflecting an updated agreement.
- Water Well at Purissima Park: **Director Kim** explained this project would explore drilling a well to offset high irrigation costs for the athletic fields, which can reach about \$5,000 per month in summer. However, further feasibility studies and test drilling would be needed. Councilmembers discussed concerns about groundwater impacts, costs, and possible alternatives such as adjusting contracts or considering artificial turf.
- Evacuation Signage: Mayor suggested the fire district might handle this since it defines evacuation routes. **Director Kim** said standards and consultants may be required, but staff could revisit the issue with the district. **CM Einfalt** added that broader coordination with the fire district is needed on emergency planning responsibilities.
- Eucalyptus Tree Removal: Councilmembers discussed whether the fire district or the town should address hazardous trees. **Director Kim** said the district typically trims vegetation but does not remove trees; Public Works has begun identifying eucalyptus trees in the right-of-way and may notify adjacent property owners for maintenance.
- Native Garden Phase Two: **Director Kim** said the scope was unclear and might involve irrigation or additional planting. Councilmember Tankha explained the project would proceed in small phases each year rather than as one large project, with committees helping with work while staff supports operations.
- Pathway Long-Term Plan: **Director Kim** clarified that the item referred to planning how to use pathway impact fee funds, not to designing new pathways, since revenue from the updated fee program is still uncertain.

Mayor Bhateja requested clearer descriptions for some items and concluded his questions.

Councilmember Tyson asked for clarification about the meeting process, noting that he had understood the discussion so far to be for clarifying questions rather than prioritizing items. **Dan Rich** confirmed that the intent had been to clarify the work plan and that formal discussion of additions or deletions would occur shortly.

Councilmember Mok suggested modifying the proposed pickleball courts project by scaling it back to a feasibility study rather than a full project. **Mr. Rich** noted that the item was currently listed as beyond capacity and that the Council could formally propose the smaller version later in the discussion.

Mr. Rich then indicated it was time for the first scheduled public comment period.

Mayor Bhateja OPENED PUBLIC COMMENTS, reminding speakers of the two-minute limit.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (Public Comment is Limited to Items which are the Subject of the Special Meeting)

1. **Dave Kehlet** spoke again regarding the proposed revision of the town’s view ordinance. He stated that the issue arose from a single dispute between him and his neighbor rather than broad community demand, noting that a prior ordinance change in 2001 followed support from two-thirds of residents. Kehlet presented photos showing that trees planted by his neighbor had grown since 2017 and now obstruct views he previously had. He argued that trimming the trees to their

earlier height would not compromise his neighbor's privacy because the tree canopies are above the line of sight and suggested a fence could address privacy concerns instead. Kehlet urged the Council not to prioritize revising the ordinance based on what he characterized as a single case.

2. **Bridget Morgan** stated that she has lived in her home for nearly 50 years and that her neighborhood joined Los Altos Hills in 2007. She spoke in support of reviewing the town's **view ordinance** as part of the work plan, emphasizing that the evaluation should be considered from a town-wide perspective rather than tied to a specific dispute.

Ms. Morgan noted that the Environmental Design and Protection Committee (EDPC) had previously reviewed the ordinance at the request of the Planning Commission and held several productive discussions, but staff could not act on the committee's observations because the item was not included in the prior work plan. She said the current cycle presents an opportunity to include it. Morgan also questioned the estimated 240 staff hours listed for the item, suggesting that an initial review could likely be completed with significantly less staff time.

3. **Gerda Cristal** reiterated concerns about the Town's view and tree ordinances, stating that the current codes are confusing and appear to favor view preservation over tree and privacy rights. She argued that this perceived imbalance discourages residents from pursuing mediation or arbitration because decisions must follow codes she believes are biased toward view seekers. **Ms. Cristal** noted that additional parcels have been annexed since the ordinance was written and said all residents should have equal consideration. She urged the Council to prioritize reviewing and clarifying the ordinances, emphasizing the need for a more balanced approach.
4. **Karen Kehlet** spoke about the ongoing tree and view dispute with her neighbors, emphasizing the stress, cost, and frustration it has caused. She stressed that the VIEW ordinance was designed to encourage compromise through mediation, not to send people to court. She argued that the Cristals' refusal to mediate has prevented the ordinance from functioning as intended. Kehlet noted that both parties have legitimate concerns and that neither is "more right" than the other. She suggested that the issue could be resolved with a compromise, such as replacing a wire fence with a solid one. She urged the Council to allow mediation to proceed and cautioned against revising the ordinance based on a single resident's experience, noting strong town-wide support for the current rules.
5. **Paul Marcos** raised two main points based on his experience with planning and building permits:
 1. Interacting with external agencies – He noted that the work plan doesn't clearly show support for residents dealing with agencies like the DEH or fire department and suggested adding something to address this.
 2. eTRAKiT system improvements – While system updates are in progress, the creation of user guides is listed as beyond capacity. Marcos highlighted that this causes confusion for residents submitting permits, creates delays, and increases staff workload. He suggested exploring community or committee support, or even AI tools, to help bridge the gap if staff lacks capacity.

He emphasized that clearer processes and guidance would improve efficiency for both residents and staff.

6. **Phillip Harter**, chair of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee (EPRC),

emphasized the need for enhanced community safety and urged the Council to prioritize having a dedicated emergency manager on staff. He noted that:

- Current efforts by a part-time or consultant emergency manager, while valuable, are insufficient for the scope of work required.
- Many essential documents and initiatives are behind schedule.
- A permanent staff member or long-term consultant is needed to ensure community safety and proper emergency preparedness.

Mr. Harter’s main request: the Council approve adding an emergency manager for Los Altos Hills to strengthen safety planning and oversight.

Director Bradford clarified that the item Philip Harter mentioned, a full-time emergency manager, is listed under the CMO’s action items for emergency preparedness, and confirmed that both Harter and the EPRC are advocating to keep it on that list.

7. Carol Gottlieb made three main points:

1. Somerville Path – She’s been waiting 10 years for the path on her property and offered the easements, urging staff to allocate time to install it.
2. Heritage House usage – She emphasized that the History Committee wasn’t consulted on the Park and Rec plans for the Heritage House. She suggested forming a discussion between committees to clarify usage, noting the need to supervise visitors because of equipment and displays.
3. View Ordinance – The committee had reviewed and revised the ordinance, but legal constraints prevented wider sharing. She noted staff are overwhelmed, limiting further action.

Mayor Bhateja CLOSED PUBLIC COMMENTS.

Vice Mayor Tyson suggested that the senior-focused programs at the Heritage House (page 8, above the line) should be handled by the Senior Commission instead of the History Committee. He noted that the commission is a joint Los Altos–Los Altos Hills commission with experience running programs at other locations, like Grant Park, and could integrate Heritage House activities efficiently while partnering with Los Altos Hills.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Dan Rich explained the work plan shows staff’s prioritized items within current resources. Council will now decide what to add or drop, with removing lower-priority items creating capacity for new ones. **Mayor Bhateja** and **CM Einfalt** agreed to review page by page, focusing first *on items to drop*.

City Clerk’s Office

No dropped items.

City Manager’s Office

Vice Mayor Tyson questioned the fire service review item, feeling it was outside the Council’s scope since the fire district handles policies and procedures. **CM Einfalt** explained the item isn’t just about response, it’s reviewing how fire-related services (like plan reviews, code enforcement, and educational programs) are delivered and coordinated. **Mr. Tyson** agreed it could be reworded as “Continued coordination with the fire district to ensure services benefit residents”. **Mayor Bhateja** noted the 100-hour allocation seemed high for routine communication. **CM Einfalt** clarified it’s for

evaluating improvements, not daily operations. **Director Bradford** gave an example: the Town helps with Home Ignition Zone assessments and public engagement programs, which go beyond standard duties. **Mayor Bhateja** suggested there's some skepticism and the item could be a potential drop, and **Dan Rich** recommended noting potential drops without fully debating them yet.

Councilmember Swan suggested expanding the fire service review item to explore what services could be shifted to the fire district to reduce town workload. **Mayor Bhateja** clarified the current step is just listing items to drop, not debating yet.

Councilmember Mok then addressed the AI workshop, noting it should be ongoing and handled by the Tech Committee. **Mayor Bhateja** distinguished this from the AI item focused on town operations efficiency. **Mr. Mok** responded that assigning it to the committee could increase the output relative to staff hours, effectively pushing the work to a committee rather than Town staff.

Community Development Department

Councilmember Swan suggested pushing the greenhouse gas inventory to a committee or dropping it. **Bhateja** confirmed it as a potential committee item.

Director Bradford explained that the LCI General Plan Annual Progress Report is a state reporting requirement, similar to the housing APR, so there was nothing to drop there.

Councilmember Swan then mentioned historic preservation should be prioritized, while **Councilmember Mok** asked about Firewise landscaping updates. **Mayor Bhateja** noted it's already off the list, and **Director Bradford** clarified it was previously kept due to duplication. **Councilmember Swan** acknowledged it's effectively handled elsewhere.

Finance Department

No dropped items.

Parks & Recreation Department

Vice Mayor Tyson proposed dropping the bench donation policy, calling it a "can of worms" and more than 10 hours of work. **Mayor Bhateja** noted it's nearly ready for Council. **Vice Mayor Tyson** also suggested dropping senior-focused programs, since those can shift to the existing Senior Commission.

Councilmember Swan asked about the Little League contract ad hoc committee, and **Councilmember Tankha** expressed skepticism, noting past attempts haven't been successful. **Mayor Bhateja** indicated he has input to share with **Public Works Director Kim** on that.

Public Works Department

Summary of the Public Works/pathways discussion:

- **Bike Advisory Signs for Pathways** – small effort (10 hours, \$5K) with some committee back-and-forth. Initially considered for removal, but staff noted signs were already ordered and locations identified, so it stays on the list.
- **Summerhill Avenue Pathway** – longstanding project (Carol Gottlieb's request). County requires ADA compliance for their roadway sections, which presents technical and cost challenges. Staff is consulting experts to justify why ADA may not be feasible. **Tankha** suggested dropping due to cost; **Councilmember Swan** suggested keeping it so residents have a safe walking option instead of walking in ditches. Consensus: keep it under review, not dropped.

- **Miscellaneous Pathways** – projects not tied to specific capital projects (e.g., Altamont, Fremont). Staff is reviewing ways to make pathway construction more efficient and monitor the Pathway Fund revenue.
- **County vs. Town jurisdiction** – Some pathways are partially on county roadways; encroachment permits and easements complicate construction. Only specific county-impacted pathways (e.g., Summerhill) require county review; others can proceed without county involvement.
- **Accessibility question** – Mok emphasized the need to clarify ADA/accessibility requirements. If the county responds negatively, some pathways could potentially be dropped.

Overall, discussion focused on jurisdictional challenges, ADA feasibility, costs, and prioritization of which pathways to continue.

Dan Rich noted that the Council should quickly move on to the discussion of *items to add*.

1. PRA Software (City Clerk)
 - Consider adding software to manage Public Records Act requests.
 - Could save ~10 staff hours per month.
2. AI Operations Review
 - Send AI efficiency exploration to the Tech Committee for recommendations.
3. Deposit / Refund Management
 - Add project to improve procedures for returning project deposits after issues with delayed refunds.
4. Inspection Scheduling Automation
 - Software system to allow contractors to schedule inspections via phone/text instead of staff calls.
5. Historic Preservation Update
 - Proposed to prevent further loss of historic homes (e.g., Avidano House demolition).
6. Finance System Improvements
 - Some projects already underway (budgeting, payroll, reconciliation).
 - Move fixed asset management and stale data checks to beyond-capacity list.
7. Pickleball Feasibility Study
 - Strong public demand; proposed 40-hour study to evaluate locations and costs.
8. Evacuation Signage
 - Potential add-back project coordinated with the Fire District.
9. Eucalyptus Tree Management
 - Explore removal or mitigation due to wildfire risks along evacuation routes.
10. Native / Nature Garden Project
 - Possible environmental landscaping project, potentially coordinated with the Fire District.

Council discussed taking a break after completing the initial collection of potential add and drop items for the work plan. Staff confirmed that this aligned with the meeting flow and that the next step would be a lunch break. The Council agreed to recess for lunch and continue the meeting afterward, with discussion about whether to reconvene at 1:00 p.m. or 1:15 p.m. Members also noted the possibility of continuing discussions during a working lunch. After the break, the Council planned to resume the meeting and confirm the timing of the next public comment period.

Council reviewed the proposed process for adding new items to the work plan during the year. Staff explained that a two-step process would continue to be used: first, a Councilmember or committee

may raise a potential item during Council Initiated Items, and if there is general Council consensus, staff would return at a later meeting with a full staff report and analysis. At that second meeting, the Council could decide whether to add the item to the work plan. Staff also noted a change from prior years: instead of requiring the removal or deprioritization of an existing item when adding a new one, staff would present the cost or resource implications (such as additional funding, consultants, or staffing) associated with adding the new item. This more flexible approach will be tested during the current year.

Mayor Bhateja asked staff to clarify aspects of the two-year work plan process. Staff confirmed that a mid-cycle review similar to the Housing Element process would occur the following January. **Mayor** also requested to review the revised finance items, noting that changes had been made. Staff confirmed that the finance spreadsheet had been updated to clarify which items were above and below the line and offered to display the updated version for Council review.

Staff presented a revised finance spreadsheet clarifying which items were above and below the line. Items identified as below the line (beyond capacity) included completing and implementing a new impact fee study for additional impact fees, as well as improvements to financial system modules for fixed asset tracking and project accounting, which currently lack a defined timeline. Staff noted that fixed assets are currently tracked using Excel spreadsheets and that a future upgrade would involve using financial software for tracking. Council asked whether any of the below-the-line items should be moved up but expressed no further changes.

Council discussed the process for considering additional items proposed by Councilmembers. **Councilmember Swan** noted that the public should have an opportunity to comment on items that Councilmembers want to add. Staff clarified that the earlier discussion had focused only on items already listed in the work plan spreadsheet, but that there were additional lists of proposed items, including those submitted by Councilmembers and committees. Council agreed that these additional lists should also be reviewed before voting, and staff prepared to display the Councilmember project list for consideration.

- Pickleball Courts / Standard Operating Procedures:
 - Mayor Bhateja clarified the approach to documenting standard operating procedures (SOPs), advocating a "document-as-you-go" method rather than elevating it to a formal project.
 - City Manager Einfalt confirmed this falls under day-to-day operations.
 - Mayor Bhateja proposed a project to monitor SOP documentation, which staff agreed is reasonable.
- Broadband Access:
 - Councilmember Mok noted incomplete knowledge of residents without broadband and emphasized the need for a survey to identify gaps.
 - Staff confirmed plans to conduct a survey as part of gathering resident information.
- Pathways:
 - Councilmember Swan requested the one mile of new pathways goal remain in the plan, confirming it was already included.
- Committee Priorities:
 - Mayor Bhateja noted that at least one priority from each committee's list is already captured.
- Green Sheet Accounts:
 - Councilmember Swan requested adding the green sheet accounts project, offering to deprioritize ADUs to accommodate it.
- Committee Projects – Environmental Design and Protection Committee (EDPC):

- Councilmember Tankha requested a fresh review of the view ordinance, moving it above the line for staff attention.
- The native garden / Heritage House landscaping project was discussed:
 - EDPC’s estimated cost of \$25,000 was noted; scope may be adjusted.
 - Council agreed to add it to the work plan as “Heritage House / native garden.”
 - Staff will coordinate with Cody to clarify allocations and details.
- ☐ Next Steps:
 - Staff to continue coordinating with committees on scope and funding allocations.
 - Projects added above the line will receive staff attention while staying mindful of capacity and cost estimates.
- ☐ EDPC Projects – Parking:
 - Councilmember Swan asked about parking specifics (multifamily vs. single-family).
 - City Manager Einfalt noted the worksheet did not specify; Swan concluded it was not a major issue.
- ☐ Electrification / Greenhouse Gas Tracking:
 - Einfalt noted the Electrification Implementation Committee (EIC) tracks electrification; Bhateja suggested this could be included in the survey or handled by the committee.
 - Greenhouse gas inventory remains on the list pending formal voting.
- ☐ Historic Ordinance & Open Space:
 - History Committee is bringing up the historic ordinance, already included as a potential addition.
 - Open space projects such as fence ordinance and tree ordinance are beyond capacity.
- ☐ Pathways / Master Pathway Plan:
 - Pickleball projects are already on the list.
 - Specific pathway segments: some are beyond capacity; others are within capacity.
 - Notable segments in the work plan include:
 - Altamont
 - Middle Fork to Maple Leaf
 - Old Page Mill to Christopher Lane (follow-up with Pathway Committee)
 - West Fremont from Arastradero to St. Francis
 - Master Pathway Plan (long-term 32-mile plan) listed under Beyond Capacity.
 - Council discussed metrics for overall effectiveness vs. actual development.
- ☐ Planning Commission Items:
 - Fire severity zones for parcels in mixed zones will be added back above the line for review.
 - Other Planning Commission items, such as density and fence ordinance updates, were clarified as either within or beyond capacity.
- ☐ Next Steps / Technology & Capacity:
 - All technology items were identified.
 - Staff to integrate new items above the line into the work plan as appropriate.

Mayor Bhateja then OPENED PUBLIC COMMENTS before Council discussion and voting on the work plan items.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. **Karen Kehlet** addressed the council regarding the ongoing tree view dispute with a neighbor. She requested that the council not add this issue to the current work plan, emphasizing that doing so could make mediation impossible and undermine the ordinance’s intended function. Ms. Kehlet noted that the dispute is not a major town-wide issue and expressed concern that adding it could

stall resolution, as it would give the neighbor no incentive to settle. She also highlighted the difficulty in separating council action from the ongoing dispute.

Councilmember Tankha responded, clarifying that ordinances do not apply retroactively, and any council decision would only affect future situations. He noted that the council’s consideration of the issue would not interfere with the current mediation process. The council acknowledged the concern, confirming that any action taken would be forward-looking and would not impact the ongoing resolution between the parties.

2. **Carol Gottlieb** addressed the council regarding the Summerhill Path, expressing concern about its current status on the work plan. She noted that significant funds have already been spent and emphasized that the project should continue to be considered in negotiations with the county. Ms. Gottlieb stated that if negotiations reach an impasse, she does not want a concrete or rubber path in front of her property. She highlighted that a court case might allow for a native path instead and noted the safety concerns of the busy street, emphasizing the potential risk to pedestrians.
3. **Bridget Morgan** spoke regarding the Summerhill Path and raised the issue of ADA compliance. Reflecting on her experience approximately 9–10 years ago while serving on the Pathways Committee, she recalled that Carl Cahill had informed the committee about a California Supreme Court decision in Santa Cruz County supporting the notion that nature trails are not required to be ADA compliant. Ms. Morgan suggested that the city attorney could provide a legal opinion on whether the town’s pathway system, particularly native or natural paths, would be similarly exempt. She emphasized that wilderness paths, such as those in Yosemite or Yellowstone, are not ADA compliant and are not required to be, and she believes the town’s pathways may fall under the same principle.

Public Works Director Kim provided additional information regarding the Summerhill Pathway, noting that it is currently on the drop list. He reported that, during the morning’s discussion, feedback was received from the project consultant supporting the rationale for forwarding the item to the county for review. The consultant indicated that the project may not be technically feasible, but the recommendation is to submit it for county review before making a final decision to drop the project. Mr. Kim emphasized that this step should be taken to ensure the town has explored all options prior to removal from consideration.

Strategic Goals and Drop List Discussion:

Dan Rich reviewed the four strategic goals

1. Quality of Life and Community Character,
2. Public Safety,
3. Effective Government, and
4. Infrastructure

and confirmed with the Council that everyone was comfortable keeping them as currently adopted. He then introduced the “drop list” of potential projects, including the

- Fire Services Review,
- greenhouse gas inventory,
- Firewise duplicated task,
- bench policy,
- senior programs item, and the
- Summerhill Pathway,

noting estimated staff hours for context. Council confirmed keeping the Summerhill Pathway on the list.

Director Bradford provided additional clarification regarding the greenhouse gas inventory, explaining that the committee leads the effort under the Climate Action Plan while staff support data collection, including tracking vehicle miles, solar output, and PG&E usage. This ensures accurate measurement of progress toward the town’s climate goals. **Vice Mayor Tyson** emphasized the importance of measurement in driving improvement, citing the global 1.5-degree temperature increase as a reminder of ongoing climate urgency. **Councilmember Swan** and **Mayor Bhateja** questioned the frequency of reporting, with **Director Bradford** noting that staff would confirm any state mandate requirements. **CM Einfeldt** clarified that the intent is to involve the committee where possible while maintaining staff oversight for data collection.

Finally, **Councilmember Swan** recommended keeping the bench policy on the work plan, acknowledging that most of the work has been completed and it is nearly ready for implementation.

Dan Rich summarized that the Council was down to four remaining items, two of which—Fire Services Review and Greenhouse Gas Inventory—would be moved to committees. He confirmed whether the Council was comfortable with this approach. **Mayor Bhateja** noted that AI improvements, intended to make staff more efficient, would also go to the committees and clarified that this was not considered “drop” items since it was not previously on the work plan.

Dan Rich introduced the final list of potential additions to the work plan, which included

- monitoring progress and documenting standard operating procedures (SOPs),
- green sheets,
- a fresh review of the View Ordinance,
- PRA software,
- heat pumps,
- deposit management,
- inspection scheduling,
- the Historic Preservation Ordinance,
- Pickleball,
- water well management,
- Eucalyptus, and the
- Native Garden/Heritage House.

Councilmember Swan raised a question about including the water well, and **Mayor Bhateja** noted he would consult with Director Kim on possible optimization. **Councilmember Tankha** recommended removing it for now, with the option to add it later.

Dan then explained the prioritization process: each Council member would receive five dots to indicate their top four priorities (numbered 1–4) plus one unnumbered choice. The dots would be placed on a wall for visual reference, and any item receiving at least three dots would be considered for inclusion. Staff would then review the results, determine feasibility, and return with recommendations for final approval. **CM Einfeldt** clarified that Council members could not assign multiple votes to a single item.

The councilmembers walked around the Council Chambers and added their voting dots to their preferred work plan items.

The meeting recessed for 20 minutes.

CM Einfalt reported that staff had conducted a huddle during the recess to review all items that received three or more votes during the prioritization exercise. These items were organized into three categories: deletions from the work plan (with some deferred to committees), additions that could be absorbed within existing capacity, and additions requiring budgetary requests.

For deletions, the Fire Services Review from the City Manager’s office was removed, while the greenhouse gas inventory and senior programs for Heritage House were deferred to the respective committees, with the Environmental Initiatives Committee (EIC) engaged for the greenhouse gas inventory.

Additions that could be absorbed within current capacity included the green sheets project, designated to the City Manager’s office. **CM Einfalt** noted that staff would build toward a council discussion on potential voter-led initiatives or protections associated with this item, including input from the Town Attorney to inform the scope.

Additions requiring budgetary requests included inspection scheduling software, deposit management, and heat pumps for Community Development; the Native Garden project for Public Works; and PRA software for the City Clerk. These items would be incorporated into the proposed budget discussions beginning in May and June, with implementation targeted for July 1. **Councilmember Tankha** emphasized delegating as much work as possible to committees to optimize resources, and **CM Einfalt** noted that some projects could benefit from committee recommendations, though administrative oversight would still require staff time. **Mayor Bhateja** suggested consulting with other municipalities to guide decisions on inspection and deposit management software. **Councilmember Swan** inquired whether Silicon Valley Clean Energy could assist with the heat pump rebate program, and **Vice Mayor Tyson** noted existing collaboration but clarified limits on the Town’s role.

Dan Rich summarized that items not receiving majority votes included the Historic Preservation Ordinance, pickleball courts, eucalyptus trees, monitoring the documentation of SOPs, and the View Ordinance. **CM Einfalt** clarified that no commitments were being made for these items at this time. Staff would continue to assess whether additional support might come from consultants or potential full-time employees, which could unlock further progress on municipal code updates and other projects. The Town would further investigate budgetary needs and implementation feasibility before finalizing decisions.

Mayor Bhateja requested a record of the items that did not make the cut line, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a list for reference. **CM Einfalt** confirmed that a report would be produced documenting all items that received votes, ensuring there would be a record of both the items that were approved and those that were not.

MOTION MADE AND SECONDED: Councilmember Tankha moved to APPROVE the changes to the Work Plan as documented.

Vice Mayor Tyson seconded the motion.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

AYES: MOK, SWAN, TANKHA, TYSON, BHATEJA

NOES: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

RECUSED: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

City Manager Einfalt confirmed that the council had reached their deliverable for the work session. **Mayor Bhateja** expressed his appreciation for the preparation and efforts of staff, highlighting Mr. Rich's helpful contributions and the public's input. He acknowledged that some corrections were expected but praised the overall organization and execution of the session.

Councilmember Tyson commented that he found the process effective, particularly the department-by-department organization and the description of ongoing day-to-day activities, even though it was somewhat overwhelming and likely incomplete. **Mayor Bhateja** added a note about including page numbers next time. **Councilmember Tankha** remarked that the session had been very stress-free and productive. Mayor Bhateja concluded by thanking everyone and officially adjourning the meeting.

3. ADJOURN

Pursuant to Ordinance No. 506, the Council Meeting shall adjourn no later than 10:00 p.m., unless otherwise approved by a majority of the Councilmembers present.

The meeting adjourned at **2:30 PM**.

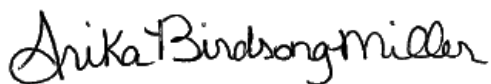
ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in the meeting, please contact the City Clerk at 650-941-7222. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

Copies of all agenda reports and supporting data are available for inspection at Town Hall, 26379 Fremont Road and the Los Altos Main Library 72 hours in advance of the meeting. A complete agenda can be found on the Town's webpage: <http://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov>. A complete packet of information is available for inspection during the meeting at the table to the back of the Council Chambers.

The Council may take action on any agenda item in any manner deemed appropriate by Council.

Respectfully submitted,



Arika Birdsong-Miller