

A. Introduction

The City of Palo Alto is committed to becoming a sustainable community. This report summarizes existing services, programs, policies and initiatives in Palo Alto that address sustainability, and identifies ways in which these components can be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

One of the most common ways to define “sustainable community” is one which meets the needs of the present population without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Achieving sustainability requires balancing what may be competing goals for the economy, social equity and the natural environment.

Clearly, sustainability is an extremely broad topic. To prepare this report, DC&E conducted a review of the City of Palo Alto’s Comprehensive Plan, recently adopted Climate Protection Plan, other plans, website, recent analyses and local programs. While this review was not exhaustive, DC&E believes this report includes the majority of the City’s resources related to sustainability.

Palo Alto is currently working toward the following economic, equity and environmental goals, as stated in the City’s official Sustainability Policy:

- ◆ **Economy:** Maintain a healthy, thriving and well-balanced economy comprising a blend of large and small business, which encourages the development of independent businesses and is resilient to the changes common to California's economy.
- ◆ **Social Equity:** Continuously improve the quality of life for all Palo Alto community members without adversely affecting others.
- ◆ **Environment:** Enhance the quality of the air, water, land and other natural resources by minimizing human impacts on local, regional and global ecosystems through greater conservancy, reduced pollution, increased efficiency, reduced construction and demolition waste, green building, and

protection of native vegetation, fish, wildlife habitat and other ecosystems.

Sustainability practices must be enacted at all levels of society, locally and regionally. Mayor Kleinberg's Green Ribbon Task Force is an example of a program initiated at the City level which seeks to mobilize stakeholders to find solutions to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. The services, programs and policies in this report are organized according to the stakeholder group they target. For example, the Residents section (B) includes programs that address the daily needs of residents, such as transportation and child care, while the Businesses section (C) contains programs for improving business' operational efficiency and reducing waste.

B. Residents

1. Housing

Provision of attainable and affordable housing, and higher density housing located near public transit, is supported under the current Comprehensive Plan Policies and with the land designation of Transit-oriented Residential. The Comprehensive Plan references an imbalanced jobs to housing ratio and advocates a more balanced ratio. The extent to which the City endeavors to provide Transit-oriented Residential development will be important in meeting state-mandated regional sustainability plans in the future.

Affordable housing is essential to a sustainable community because it creates housing opportunities for lower income workers to reside in the community, thereby reducing their reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and fossil fuels.

As of January 2008, there were 1,456 subsidized rental units in Palo Alto in 27 developments. There are also 158 Below Market Rate (BMR) rental units that are currently occupied or available, with another 15 units in the development pipeline.

There are 236 BMR ownership units in 42 separate developments throughout the City. The initial sale price for BMR units is set by the City.

More information about the public and private programs that produce affordable housing is found in the sections below.

a. Palo Alto Housing Corporation

The Palo Alto Housing Corporation (PAHC) was established in 1970 to address the lack of affordable housing in the City. PAHC's mission is to develop, acquire and manage low- and moderate-income housing in Palo Alto. PAHC administers the City's BMR Programs, is responsible for the development and management of over 500 units of rental housing and provides general housing advocacy. PAHC's properties range from single-family homes to large HUD-subsidized family complexes.

b. The Below Market Rate Purchase Program

The Below Market Rate (BMR) Purchase Program is an inclusionary program that requires developers building five or more residential units to offer at least 15 percent of those units for sale at below-market prices. Projects with seven or more units must include at least one BMR unit within the development. The initial sale price for new BMR units is set by the City of Palo Alto. Palo Alto Housing Corporation Housing Services, LLC administers the program for the City. To retain affordable housing stock in Palo Alto, the program requires certain restrictions to be recorded with the grant deed for each BMR unit. BMR owners wishing to sell their units must give the City the right of first refusal to buy it, and the City assigns the right to purchase the unit to a buyer selected by the PAHC.

c. The Below Market Rate Rental Program

The BMR Rental Program is administered by PAHC. The program provides rental apartments for low- and moderate-income households at rates below prevailing market rents. Rent increases are subject to certain limitations. Prospective renters must meet income and other eligibility requirements, and are selected from a waiting list.

d. Palo Alto Affordable Housing Fund

The Affordable Housing Fund is a housing trust fund established by the City Council to provide financial assistance for development, acquisition and rehabilitation of rental or ownership housing affordable to very low, low and moderate-income households. Units created through the fund are developed, owned and managed by local non-profit housing organizations and are restricted to certain income levels.

The two main sub-funds within the Affordable Housing Fund are:

i. Commercial Fund

The Commercial Fund is composed solely of housing mitigation fees collected from commercial and industrial developers under Chapter 16.47 of the Municipal Code. The Commercial Fund is primarily used to increase the number of new affordable housing units for Palo Alto's work force.

ii. Residential Fund

The Residential Fund is composed mainly of fees received from developers of market-rate residential projects in lieu of the provision of on-site or off-site below market rate units. The Residential Housing Fund can be used for the acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction and predevelopment of low-income housing. It can also be used to finance the administration and consultant contracts necessary to carry out the BMR program.

e. Housing Trust of Santa Clara County

The Housing Trust of Santa Clara County (HTSCC) is a public/private initiative focused on increasing the supply of affordable housing in Santa Clara County. The Trust uses a revolving loan fund and grant-making program to complement and leverage other housing resources. Palo Alto contributed \$500,000 toward the initial \$20 million investment capitalization and provided additional funding commitments, to be used exclusively for qualifying affordable housing projects located within the City. An additional contribution of \$150,000 has been provided by the City to HTSCC. Since its inception, HTSCC has invested approximately \$1.5 million in various affordable housing projects and programs in Palo Alto.

f. Santa Clara County Affordable Housing Fund

The Santa Clara County Affordable Housing Fund was created by the County Board of Supervisors in 2002. The fund provides grants and loans to non-profit agencies that carry out affordable housing projects and programs.

g. Multifamily Housing Program

The Multifamily Housing Program (MHP) is a State program through the Department of Housing and Community Development that provides low-interest loans to developers of affordable housing. MHP funds may be used for multifamily rental and transitional housing projects involving new construction, rehabilitation, acquisition and rehabilitation, or conversion of non-residential structures to permanent rental housing only.

2. Child Care

The provision of affordable child care (whether employer-, nonprofit- or privately-provided) enables more parents, particularly mothers, to enter or return to the workforce, creates more equitable opportunities for moderate- and low-income parents and strengthens families' financial security. The City Council's Child Care Advisory Committee (CCAC) was established in 1995 to promote the adequate supply of quality child care in Palo Alto. The CCAC prepared a Child Care Master Plan in 2001 to study and address child care facility and operational needs within the city and explore potential for future funding sources. The Child Care Advisory Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis.

a. Palo Alto Community Child Care

Palo Alto Community Child Care (PACCC) was established to implement and coordinate child care services in the city. PACCC provides child care for children from two months old through the 5th Grade at 15 centers throughout the city, serving 900 families per day. Approximately 17 percent of PACCC families receive subsidy from the City, State or from PACCC.

b. Community Child Care Council of Santa Clara County, Inc.

Community Child Care Council of Santa Clara County, Inc. (4C) is a resource center that links families to child care services and resources in the

County. 4C provides payments to child care providers for services and food provided to low-income children.

c. The Children’s Center of the Stanford Community (CCSC)

CCSC is a parent-teacher cooperative providing child care for children between eight weeks and five years of age. CCSC provides child care for the children of Stanford staff, faculty and students.

3. Alternative Transportation: Transit, Walking, Bicycling

Alternative transportation is an important component of sustainability, particularly in urban areas. Alternative transportation includes transit, such as trains, shuttles and buses, and non-motorized methods such as bicycling and walking. Alternative transportation is a low- or zero-emissions alternative to single-occupancy vehicles. It is also an essential service for residents and workers who do not own cars, and for those who cannot drive, such as children, the elderly and the disabled. Furthermore, it is a healthful choice for individuals to lead an active life by walking and bicycling to local services and events, and for exercise.

a. Public Transit Operators

Palo Alto is served by eight different public transit operators.

i. Caltrain

Caltrain provides regional commuter train service at the Palo Alto Transit Center and the California Avenue Station. Caltrain links Palo Alto to San Francisco and San Jose, as well as to 28 other stops in between.

ii. Caltrain Shuttle

The Deer Creek Shuttle runs between Stanford Research Park and the Palo Alto Transit Center and California Avenue Station during morning and afternoon rush hours.

iii. VTA Routes

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) operates core network, local and community, and express bus routes that provide in-town and regional service throughout Santa Clara County. Local stops include the Eas-

tridge Transit Center, Mountain View Transit Center, San Antonio Transit Center, Penitencia Creek Transit Center, the Stanford Shopping Center and the Veteran's Hospital.

iv. Samtrans

Samtrans is the San Mateo County transit operator. Its seven routes serve downtown Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, El Camino north of Palo Alto and the Stanford Research Park. Two are all-night routes.

v. East Palo Alto Shuttles

East Palo Alto shuttles are free and include the East Palo Alto Community Shuttle and the East Palo Alto Senior Shuttle. The Community Shuttle runs between seven locations in East Palo Alto and the Caltrain station, providing connections to Caltrain, Samtrans, VTA and the Marguerite Shuttle. They run seven days a week during the morning and afternoon peak periods, and late into the evening. Additional service was added in late 2007 as part of a hydrogen vehicle pilot program. The Senior shuttle serves East Palo Alto, Redwood City, Palo Alto and Mountain View, with three different routes during midday.

vi. Dumbarton Express

Dumbarton Express is a joint venture between SamTrans, AC Transit and VTA. It provides all-day express bus services between Stanford University, Palo Alto, Fremont and Union City.

vii. Palo Alto Free Shuttle

The Palo Alto Free Shuttle, operated by the City, runs on weekdays during commute and midday hours. The shuttle program has two lines, the Embarcadero Shuttle and the Crosstown Shuttle. The shuttle program has expanded in recent years to offer improved services to local schools, all day service on the Crosstown shuttle and more frequent commute service to and from the Caltrain station on the Embarcadero shuttle.

viii. Stanford Marguerite Downtown Express Shuttle

The Marguerite Shuttle, sponsored by the City and Stanford University, offers weekday service throughout the year, and evening and weekend service from September through June. The shuttle's three lines run across the Stanford University campus and to other destinations throughout Palo Alto. The shuttle is free and open to the public.

b. Way2Go Alternative Transportation Program

The Way2Go Program is administered through the City's Transportation Division and is focused on reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips in the city. The program works with schools and employers and hosts special events to promote bicycling, walking and carpool programs, along with the Palo Alto shuttle and public transit. Resources offered by the Way2Go Program include:

- ◆ Bicycle commuter assistance
- ◆ Bicycle route planning
- ◆ Alternative transportation assistance for special events
- ◆ The Bikestation at the University Avenue Caltrain station
- ◆ Sponsored events highlighting alternative transportation

c. Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee

The Committee is a citizen advisory committee that reports to the City's Planning and Community Environment Department. The Committee is tasked with reviewing bicycling-related issues in the areas of engineering, enforcement and education. The Committee's activities include:

- ◆ Review of proposed Capital Improvement Program projects, street improvements, traffic signal projects and parking facilities projects.
- ◆ Review of changes and updates to the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Municipal Code.
- ◆ Review and prioritization of the City's annual Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3 list of pedestrian and bicycle projects and report of recommendations to the City Council.

- ◆ Promoting communication between the City and the community on bicycling issues.
- ◆ Review of private development plans that include bicycle facilities or impact bicycle safety and access.

d. Let's Go Palo Alto

The City partners with the Palo Alto Recreation Foundation to provide an activity challenge website, Let's Go Palo Alto, to encourage its citizens and local employees to be active on a daily basis, including promoting walking and bicycling to local services and events, and use of the City's public transportation to reach recreation areas.

4. Energy Conservation

Given current threats posed by global warming to ecosystems, people and businesses, energy conservation is particularly important to a community's ability to sustain itself without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Energy conservation also has immediate equity implications, in that rising energy costs disproportionately impact low-income residents. The programs in this section seek to reduce household energy consumption.

a. Home Energy Efficiency Analysis

The City of Palo Alto website offers an online energy analysis tool that allows residents to identify ways to reduce their home energy consumption.

b. Solar Water Heating Program

The Solar Water Heating Program is a program of the City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU) and is administered by the California Center for Sustainable Energy. Incentives are available to residential, commercial and industrial customers of CPAU to purchase solar water heating systems.

c. PaloAltoGreen Program (for households)

Palo Alto households can sign up for renewable energy from wind and solar sources through CPAU. The average household participating in PaloAltoGreen reduces CO₂ emissions by approximately 11,000 lbs per year.¹

d. Photovoltaic Partners Program

The Photovoltaic (PV) Partners Program encourages photovoltaic installations on Palo Alto homes in support of the Million Solar Roofs Initiative, a statewide program. CPAU residential and commercial customers can get rebates for PV systems based on system size.

e. SMART Energy Rebate Program

Residents can receive rebates on various qualifying efficiency appliances including refrigerators, air conditioners, furnaces, boilers and water heaters.

f. Residential Energy Assistance Program

The Residential Energy Assistance Program (REAP) helps low-income customers to improve the efficiency of their homes by offering assistance with replacement and repairs on heating appliances and installation of weather stripping.

g. Rate Assistance Program

The Rate Assistance Program (RAP), a program of CPAU, provides a 20 percent discount on water, electricity and gas charges to residents who meet special criteria based on medical need for higher utilities consumption or financial need. Households receiving Social Security Income, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and Food Stamps automatically qualify for RAP.

5. Waste Reduction

Waste reduction, through conservation, reuse and recycling, minimizes the impacts of pollution to the local, regional and global ecosystems. There are

¹ Utilities page, City of Palo Alto website, <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/forms/pagreen/index.html>, accessed on December 12, 2008.

many programs in Palo Alto to support these objectives, some City-sponsored and others not.

City-Sponsored

a. Single Stream Recyclables Processing

The City relies on the services of its contract hauler, Palo Alto Sanitation Company (PASCO)/Waste Management Inc., for curbside collection and processing of residential and commercial single-stream recyclables, compost materials and garbage. The curbside materials are now processed at Waste Management materials recovery facilities in Castroville or San Leandro. The City's agreement with Palo Alto Sanitation Company (PASCO) will expire in July 2009.

b. Palo Alto Landfill and Composting Facility

This facility is located at 2380 Embarcadero Road. The composting operation occupies 7.5 acres and processes 21,000 tons of green material per year. The facility accepts compostable green waste for a fee; the facility also gives away and sells compost at the site.

The composting operation is located in the landfill area of the facility and will have to vacate its current site so that the landfill's final grading and conversion to parkland can be completed. The landfill will be closed in 2011, after which solid waste collected in the city will go to the Sunnyvale Materials Recovery and Transfer Station (SMaRT® Station). The SMaRT Station is discussed below.

c. Recycling Drop-Off Center

PASCO operates the City's Recycling Drop-Off Center adjacent to the entrance of the City Landfill. The Drop-Off Center accepts mixed paper, newspaper, metal cans, glass bottles and jars, plastic (#1-#7) containers, plastic bags, milk and juice cartons, corrugated cardboard boxes, magazines, telephone books, hard cover books, scrap metal, blueprints, polystyrene foam, cathode ray tubes (monitors and televisions), grease and cooking oil. Goodwill provides a trailer on-site for donation of reusable household items and clothing.

The Drop-Off Center also collects some materials normally processed by Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) operations, including antifreeze, motor oil and containers, used oil filters, household batteries, auto batteries, appliances, tires and fluorescent lights.

Due to the upcoming closure of the Palo Alto Landfill in 2011, the southern portion of the Recycling Drop-Off Center will be closed on January 12, 2009 and used by the landfill to finalize its filling operations.²

d. SMaRT Station

While the City operates its own landfill, the majority of the City's solid waste is taken to the Sunnyvale Materials Recovery and Transfer Station (SMaRT® Station) where additional recyclables and yard trimmings are recovered, processed and marketed. The facility provides buy-back and drop-off services for bottles and cans. The remaining garbage is transported for disposal to the Kirby Canyon Landfill in San Jose.

e. Palo Alto Household Hazardous Waste Program

Residents can drop off photo chemicals, household batteries, paints, solvents, chemical drain openers, pool chemicals, household cleaners, aerosols, pesticides, insecticides, pharmaceuticals and hypodermic needles at the Regional Water Quality Control Plant.

f. Palo Alto Recycling Program

This City program helps residents, schools and businesses reduce waste by encouraging reuse, source reduction and purchase of recycled content products. Programs include junk mail reduction kits, compost workshops, recycling drop-off center and free technical assistance.

² City of Palo Alto website, <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/depts/pwd/news/details.asp?NewsID=1181&TargetID=151>, accessed on December 23, 2008.

g. Demolition and Construction Debris Diversion

Since 2004, the City has required all demolition projects and all construction projects valued at \$75,000 or more to divert 90 percent of inert debris, such as concrete, asphalt, and rocks, and 50 percent of all remaining construction and demolition debris prior to and as a condition of building permit issuance. These projects must also make salvageable materials available for reuse. A recent amendment reduced the threshold valuation to \$25,000 and increased the diversion rate 75 percent of all remaining construction and demolition debris.

Non City-Sponsored

h. Computer Recycling Center

The Computer Recycling Center, located at 370 West Caribbean Drive in Sunnyvale, accepts computers, software and telephones for recycling and donation to schools.

i. Stanford Recycling Center

The Stanford Recycling Center is located on Stanford University Campus and open to all area residents. It provides recycling of a variety of materials, including papers, plastics, glass, aluminum, electronics and appliances.

j. GreenCitizen

GreenCitizen is a local non-profit located in Los Altos that provides free recycling of monitors, cathode ray tubes for TVs, whole TVs, cell phones, batteries, ink cartridges, DVDs, CDs and a wide range of other electronics.

k. Santa Clara County Recycling Hotline

The County recycling hotline uses a database, "Recyclopedia," to manage information on the availability and services of local recycling programs and recycling and reuse centers.

l. The Organics Yard

This private business located in Palo Alto offers blended soil amendments to Palo Alto residents. The amendments are mainly composed of the organic compost processed from local communities' green waste.

6. Water Conservation

Water is necessary for all species and ecosystems; clean water and healthy watersheds are core components of sustainability. Water conservation efforts promote healthy watersheds by reducing the amount of water withdrawn from local watersheds and by reducing the amount of contaminated water that ultimately returns to the watersheds.

a. Water-Efficient Landscape Standards

The Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) incorporates the Landscape Water Efficiency Standards, a set of standards applicable to any new or renovated landscape for commercial, industrial or multi-family common areas or city facility projects with 1,500 square feet or more of landscaped area. PAMC requires landscape plans to meet the requirements of the standards before a building or grading permit is issued. One of the requirements is that a water budget, or Maximum Water Allowance, be calculated for each project. The water budget allocation does not apply to residential projects.

b. Water Wise House Calls

Palo Alto offers free Water Wise House Calls for homes and apartment complexes in which trained water surveyors review water use, provide free low-flow showerheads and aerators and make water conservation recommendations, including an annual irrigation plan.

c. Water Conservation Rebate Programs

i. High Efficiency Toilet Rebates

Through a partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), Palo Alto residents can receive up to \$125 for installing High Efficiency Toilets (HETs) that use 1.28 or less gallons per flush (gpf).

ii. Residential Irrigation System Hardware Rebate Program

Residents who participate in a Water-Wise House Call may qualify for a \$1,000 rebate for new water-efficient irrigation equipment such as rain sensors, pressure-regulating spray heads and valves, and spray or rotor heads with check valves.

iii. Water Efficient Landscape Rebate Program

Palo Alto residents can now get up to \$2,000 for replacing irrigated turf grass with drought-resistant plants or installing permeable hardscape and agreeing to retain the landscape for a minimum of five years.

iv. Weather-Based Irrigation Controller Rebate Program

Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers (WBICs) use local weather conditions to scientifically calculate and automatically adjust irrigation schedules to meet the needs of specific landscape conditions. The program provides rebates on WBICs that manage and modify watering schedules based on local conditions and evapo-transpiration (ET) rates.

v. Rebates on Energy Star Appliances

The rebates program is funded by CPAU and SCVWD and is administered by PG&E. Rebates are available for appliances such as clothes washers and dishwashers.

7. Water Quality

The health of the San Francisco Bay is vital for Palo Alto and the surrounding areas to remain sustainable. Wetland habitats play a major role in filtering and cleaning surface water. They retain and degrade numerous harmful chemicals associated with urban areas. Save the Bay and local volunteers have been working to improve habitat in the Palo Alto Baylands by planting native plants. Residents are also asked to participate in several City-sponsored programs described in Section D of this report that promote water quality in Palo Alto's creeks and baylands.

8. Food

Food systems are critical aspects of sustainability because the manner in which food is grown, produced and transported has significant ecological, social and economic impacts. Food is often grown with pesticides that can have a harmful effect on the soil and human health. Under industrialized food systems, food is grown and produced in relatively few locations, and travels long distances to reach the average consumer's plate, producing green-

house gas emissions in the process. Although foods produced locally or organically tend to have fewer environmental impacts, they are often more expensive than conventionally-grown and -produced foods, and are not affordable to some segments of society.

In recent years, there has been increasing public interest in the origins of foods and methods by which they are produced and transported. Sales of organic produce and other organic products have increased greatly in recent years, and terms such as “food miles”, “food-sheds” and “locavores” have entered the popular lexicon. “Food miles” refers to the distance a particular food item traveled from its source to the consumer. “Food-sheds” and “locavores” refer to food produced within a specific radius of one’s home, and the practice of primarily eating food within this radius. The transport of food across the U.S. or across the world results in emissions of greenhouse gases, and the method by which products are transported and preserved also contributes to the product’s overall environmental impact. Despite increasing awareness of and interest in local food systems, there are currently no City programs that require or encourage the provision or procurement of local or organic food. As a result, the choice to sell or buy food from within the Bay Area or California is left to private individual and businesses.

The section below discusses local offerings for local and organic food, as well as charitable food programs.

a. Community Gardens

The Palo Alto Community Garden Program resides within the Community Services Department and is managed by the Open Space and Parks Division. Residents can sign up for plots in one of three community gardens in the city: the Main Garden, Edith Johnson Garden and Eleanor Pardee Garden. The program also provides resources such as compost workshops and organic gardening classes.

b. Farmers' Markets

Until most recently, there have been two farmers' markets in Palo Alto: the Palo Alto Farmers' Market, each Saturday from May through December, and the California Avenue Farmers' Market, each Sunday year-round. The Palo Alto Market, established in 1981, features approximately 50 vendors selling produce, other agricultural products and locally-produced food. The Palo Alto Market is located in downtown on Gilman Street. The California Avenue Farmers' Market, located on California Avenue at El Camino, was started in 2007. The 60 farmers and food vendors at the California Avenue Market draw approximately 2,000 people each Sunday.³ Beginning Earth Day 2009, a third farmers market opened as a result of efforts from City Hall. Approximately 30 farmers from Capay Valley, who had been servicing primarily the employees of IDEO since the summer of 2008, are now supplying downtown employees with their weekly produce at King Plaza.

c. Food Closets and Soup Kitchens

i. *Rahima Foundation*

The Rahima Foundation provides monthly distribution of non-perishable food items, such as rice, flour, oil, pasta and beans.

ii. *Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties*

Second Harvest distributes surplus and non-marketable food to low-income households in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, serving an average of 163,000 individuals each month. The Food Bank also runs community nutrition programs and links low-income households to food resources in their neighborhoods.

iii. *South Palo Alto Food Closet*

The food closet is a grocery program that assists families with children in meeting their weekly food needs and provides emergency food service.

³ Ron Pardini, Executive Director of Urban Village Farmers' Market Association. Email communication with Sophie Mintier on December 19, 2008.

iv. St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room

The dining room provides free hot lunches six days per week, 52 weeks per year.

v. St. Vincent de Paul Society, North County

St. Vincent de Paul provides emergency food assistance, among other services.

C. Businesses

1. Business Operations

The products and services offered by businesses and the way in which they operate have significant implications for sustainability.

a. Green Business Program

The Green Business Program is a voluntary regional program for certifying and recognizing businesses that use environmentally sound operating practices. The Program primarily targets small and medium sized businesses. Businesses are evaluated on measures in four areas: water and energy conservation, pollution prevention, solid waste reduction and recycling. The Program provides checklists for implementing the measures and provides flexibility for meeting them. The Association of Bay Area Governments coordinates the Program, which is implemented by Green Business Coordinators in nine participating counties. The City of Palo Alto is a partner and provides funding for the Program.

b. Free Business Efficiency Analysis

Palo Alto businesses have access to online calculators and analysis tools to ensure they are optimizing energy use. Palo Alto businesses may request on-site comprehensive energy studies of their commercial facilities by CPAU staff to identify efficiency measures.

c. SMART Energy Rebate Program

Commercial customers can receive rebates for installing energy-efficient ceiling insulation, efficient boilers and water heaters.

d. Business Recycling Program

Recycling Program staff can help businesses identify waste streams, suggest waste reduction strategies, assist in establishing and maintaining recycling programs, recycling collection and employee education.

e. Clean Bay Businesses

Clean Bay Business vehicle service shops and car washes practice “waste minimization” and keep pollutants out of both the storm drains and the sewers. In order to be recognized as a Clean Bay Business, a vehicle service shop must adopt special practices to prevent water pollution.

f. PaloAltoGreen Program (for businesses)

Businesses can sign up for renewable energy from wind and solar sources. The program purchases wind energy from a wind farm in Oregon and solar energy from three large solar installations in the Bay Area. PaloAltoGreen costs an extra 1.5 cents per kWh for small businesses. Large businesses can choose to participate in \$15 per month increments for each 1,000 kWh block.

g. BYOBag Program

The Bring Your Own Bag (BYOBag!) is an ongoing campaign encouraging shoppers to bring their own bags when they shop. The Zero Waste Program is collaborating with residents, businesses and non-profits to reach all segments of the community and has conducted observational surveys to measure shopper’s bag use habits and develop strategy for furthering the campaign. The Zero Waste Program also collaborates with all cities within the nine-county Bay Area on a reusable bag campaign through a coalition called the Bay Area Recycling Outreach Coalition (BayROC).

D. Government

This section reviews consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and municipal programs, and notable City ordinances related to sustainability.

1. City Policies and Codes

a. Green Building Ordinance

On June 2, 2008, the City Council adopted a mandatory Green Building Ordinance. The ordinance mandates building standards and thresholds for residential and non-residential private development projects. It specifies use of the Build It Green GreenPoint Rated system for residential projects and the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system for commercial projects. The ordinance is retroactive for commercial projects for which planning applications were submitted after December 3, 2007, the day the City Council adopted the Climate Protection Plan describing intended green building standards. A Green Building Guide and tracking systems have been developed to assist applicants in meeting the program requirements and monitor the success of the program. An existing policy for City facilities was also updated in December 2007 to require higher green building levels.

b. Pedestrian Transit Oriented Development (PTOD)

Sustainability includes providing a walkable, bikeable community to provide the ideal environment for a healthy, fit community. The Pedestrian Transit Oriented Development (PTOD) zone district was established to encourage walkable, mixed use development to be located near transit centers, and several PTOD projects are under way that will implement sustainability concepts.

c. California Energy Code Amendments

On December 1, 2008, the City Council approved an ordinance adding a new chapter to the City's Building Code that establishes minimum energy efficiency standards for all new residential and non-residential construction. The chapter imposes energy efficiency standards that are more stringent than the 2005 California Building Energy Efficiency Standards and makes the Building Code consistent with the requirements of Palo Alto's Green Building Ordinance.

d. Title 16.7

Title 16.7 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code requires developers of large commercial and industrial projects, as a condition of development, to contribute

to programs that increase the city's supply of low- and moderate-income housing stock. Developers must provide units or in-lieu fees. The number of units required is determined by the following formula: $\text{Gross Square Feet}/350 * 0.17 = \text{Required number of units}$. Housing units developed under Title 16.7 are sold or rented pursuant to Palo Alto's below market rate (BMR) program. In-lieu fees are paid to the City's housing fund at the rate of \$15 dollars per square foot of proposed development, and must be paid prior to issuance of grading or building permits.

e. Recycled Water Ordinance

On May 12, 2008, the City Council adopted a recycled water ordinance that requires new construction and remodeling projects to be constructed in a manner to readily accept recycled water for irrigation use when it becomes available. Single-family homes are exempt from the ordinance, but commercial, industrial and institutional projects with more than 1,500 square feet of landscape are required to meet the standards. As of June 12, 2008, projects applying for a building permit need to demonstrate a separate irrigation system with the required recycled water infrastructure.

f. School Commute Corridors Network

The Palo Alto City Council adopted the School Commute Corridors Network in October 2003, signifying that principal school commute routes should be given priority for public investment purposes and be accorded enhanced review as regards proposals for new commercial driveways and other street changes. The purpose of the Network is to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle facilities improvements, sidewalk replacements, street re-pavings and other improvements to travel safety on the most important school commute routes. The Network designates a sub-set of Palo Alto's street system to form a comprehensive and continuous system of travel routes linking residential neighborhoods to all public school sites in Palo Alto. The system includes residential collector and arterial streets, existing and proposed bicycle boulevards, off-road paths and residential local streets necessary to ensure continuity of routes and direct access to each school site.

g. Tree Preservation Ordinance

The Tree Preservation Ordinance was enacted to protect specified tree species and property values, as well as to prevent significant adverse impacts to adjacent properties. The ordinance prohibits removal of trees in the protected category unless certain criteria are met, and requires information on existing trees to be submitted with applications for building and other permits. The Ordinance also stipulates maintenance and protection standards for owners of protected trees.

h. Ordinance on Plastics, Polystyrene and Non-Recyclable Food Service Containers

In March, 2009, the Palo Alto City Council approved restrictions on the use of plastic shopping bags at large grocery stores, because plastics comprise a substantial portion of the waste stream and litter in local creeks. The program to shift to reusable bags includes public outreach and reusable bag give-aways. Fees on paper bags are also being studied, and an action to prohibit the distribution of Styrofoam food containers by food vendors is also being developed. In April 2009, The City Council decided to eliminate the use of Styrofoam by food vendors. The Council also directed staff to expand the restriction on plastic bags to all commercial retail stores.

2. Plans

a. Palo Alto Climate Protection Plan

The City adopted the Climate Protection Plan in December 2007. The goal of the Climate Protection Plan (CPP) is to present a comprehensive inventory of municipal- and community-generated greenhouse gas emissions, propose reduction targets and identify practical steps to reach those targets. The CPP characterizes municipal emissions as those generated by City government and community emissions as those resulting from the activities of businesses, residents and workers. The CPP calculated Palo Alto's 2005 emissions from municipal and community sources to be 793,621 metric tons per year. CPP sets and Council approved the following emission reduction goals:

- ◆ Short Term Goal: By 2009, Palo Alto will reduce City-generated emissions by 5 percent from 2005 emission levels for a total reduction of 3,266 metric tons of CO₂.
- ◆ Medium Term Goal: By 2012, Palo Alto will reduce its City- and community-generated emissions by 5 percent from the 2005 emission levels for a total reduction of 39,702 metric tons of CO₂.
- ◆ Long Term Goal: By 2020, Palo Alto will reduce its City- and community-generated emissions by 15 percent of 2005 levels, equal to 119,140 metric tons of CO₂, and bring the community in line with State reduction goals.

The three primary sources of emissions within the City are transportation fuels (40 percent of total emissions), energy (19 percent) and solid waste (15 percent). The CPP identifies the costs of potential emission-reduction strategies, some of which would be paid for by the City, and others of which would be borne by the community. Actions are divided into short term (those that should be completed by July 2009), medium term (those that should be completed by 2012) and long term (which will require substantial additional resources, considerable staff effort and substantive community involvement). All City departments also developed their own plans to reduce emissions by five percent this year compared to the 2005 baseline.

b. Zero Waste Strategic Plan

In November 2004, the City Council directed City staff to prepare a Zero Waste Plan for Palo Alto. The Strategic Plan was adopted in October 2005. The Plan identifies core objectives and strategies to achieve zero waste. These strategies include policies and incentives aimed at both waste reduction and recycling expansion. The Strategic Plan includes the following key objectives:

- ◆ Encourage all sectors to implement zero waste
- ◆ Develop infrastructure beyond recycling
- ◆ Lead by example and advocate zero waste
- ◆ Update waste data and develop a Zero Waste Operational Plan

c. Palo Alto Zero Waste Operational Plan

The Palo Alto Zero Waste Operational Plan was developed by a City-appointed task force and adopted in June 2007. The Operational Plan identifies policies, programs and facilities needed to reach the goals of 73 percent waste diversion by 2011 and zero waste by 2021. The Operational Plan targets the following objectives identified in the Strategic Plan:

- ◆ Develop a waste composition study that identifies the types and amounts of materials remaining in the City's disposed waste stream.
- ◆ Recommend the programs that will be needed to meet the service needs identified in the Strategic Plan.
- ◆ Recommend the facilities and candidate locations for the facilities that will be needed once the City's landfill closes in 2011.
- ◆ Identify appropriate policies, incentives and requirements to implement the Operational Plan.
- ◆ Identify the cost of implementing the Operational Plan.
- ◆ Determine the funding and staffing necessary to implement the Operational Plan.

d. City of Palo Alto Utilities 2005 Urban Water Management Plan

The Urban Water Management Plan is the guiding document for the treatment, conservation and distribution of Palo Alto's water resources. The document includes a water shortage contingency plan that provides protocols for drought or catastrophic shortages. The plan also discusses the role of recycled water in meeting the city's water needs.

e. Urban Forest Master Plan

The Urban Forest Master Plan is intended to identify a comprehensive strategy for managing and expanding the private and public urban forest. The plan will include a preliminary inventory of the public forest and its carbon trapping capacity. Due to limited State or local funds for Master Plan development, the plan is expected to be spearheaded by a local citizen task force.

f. Palo Alto Bicycle Transportation Plan

The Bicycle Transportation Plan was adopted by City Council in November 2003. The Plan responds to Comprehensive Plan Programs T-18, “Develop and periodically update a comprehensive bicycle plan,” and T-19, “Develop, periodically update and implement, a bicycle facilities improvement program that prioritizes critical pedestrian and bicycle links to parks, schools, retail centers and civic facilities.”

The Plan recommends a bikeways network including bicycle boulevards, bike lanes on arterial streets, improvements at key intersections and new bicycle/pedestrian grade separations. The Plan also contains recommended best practices for bicycle education and outreach programs, bicycle facilities design and maintenance and enforcement.

3. Programs

a. Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

The CDBG Program is the principal federal program providing localities with grants to devise innovative approaches to improve the physical, economic and social conditions in their communities. Palo Alto’s CDBG Program is focused on expanding and maintaining the affordable housing supply, promoting housing opportunities and choices, maintaining and improving community facilities and providing supportive services for targeted low-income groups, including persons who are homeless, persons with disabilities, the elderly and other special needs groups. The majority of funds are distributed as grants to local nonprofit agencies. CDBG grants support Palo Alto’s sustainability goal because affordable housing is a key aspect of creating an equitable community. The provision of affordable housing is particularly important in cities with high housing costs like Palo Alto, since it makes it possible for more people who work there to be able to afford to live there.

b. Green Ribbon Task Force

The Green Ribbon Task Force on Climate Protection was in 2006 to recommend steps and actions by stakeholder groups to reduce greenhouse gas emis-

sions. The Task Force Final Report, released in December 2006, establishes targets for emissions reduction. The Report calls for the City to match or improve upon the Governor's greenhouse gas emission-cutting goals of reaching 2000 levels by 2010, 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. The long term goal of the Palo Alto Climate Protection Plan (CPP) of achieving a 15 percent reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2020 would be equivalent to the Task Force's goal of cutting emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, since it is estimated statewide that 2005 levels were 15 percent higher than 1990 levels.⁴ The CPP grew out of the recommendations of the Task Force. A green building working group of city staff who researched and prepared the green building program grew out of the recommendations of the Task Force. The Community Environmental Action Partnership (CEAP) was a product of the CPP recommendations to foster action and communication among community groups. Other results of the CPP include the City's new Sustainability Coordinator position and a Green Team of City staff from all departments to continue local sustainability efforts.

c. City Employee Commute Program

The Employee Commute Program provides incentives for City employees who commute to work via transit, vanpools, carpools, bicycling or walking. Approximately 15 percent of eligible City employees participate in the program. Incentives include Commuter Checks for employees who ride transit or are in a vanpool, and taxable cash incentives for employees who carpool, walk or bicycle to work.

d. Flexible Work Hours Program

Most City employees are eligible for 9/80 schedules (nine hour days with City offices closed every other Friday). Police can work a 4/11 schedule (eleven hour days four days a week). Flexible schedules for City employees decrease commuter trips resulting in a reduction of vehicle miles traveled and associated greenhouse gas emissions.⁵

⁴ *Palo Alto Climate Protection Plan*, 2007, page 10.

⁵ *Annual Report*, City of Palo Alto Sustainability Program, 2003.

e. Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFVs) for City Fleet

The City fleet includes about 70 vehicles that use Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) or a combination of CNG with gasoline, comprising about 20 percent of its fleet.

The City fleet also includes eight electric vehicles and the City is on a waiting list to lease four more. The City will consider incorporating fuel cell vehicles once they become available.

f. Pilot Biodiesel Fuel Program

The City has initiated the first phases of the pilot program, using biodiesel in golf course vehicles and replacing the 50,000 gallons of conventional fuel used by refuse and composting equipment at the City's landfill with biodiesel. If the biodiesel meets performance and reliability standards, the program will be expanded to local fire stations.

g. Education and Outreach Programs

The City of Palo Alto has developed numerous educational programs designed to help City residents understand the impacts of their personal choices on the City's sustainability efforts. Such choices include decisions related to food and consumer product consumption; air travel; vehicle type, age and usage; home heating; usage of home appliances; and home recycling and landscape-related water consumption. Currently, the City utilizes its website and newsletters to educate the community and publicize opportunities to participate in sustainable programs. These include:

i. *The Green Neighbors Program*

A project of Joint Venture Silicon Valley's Climate Protection Task Force, Green Neighbors helps community-based organizations raise funds for projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support sustainability. Green Neighbors identifies local, community-based projects that reduce carbon emissions and posts them on the Web.

ii. Hike and Nature Programs

These include educational nature hikes, special events like outdoor movies and star parties, as well as restoration programs. Volunteers are encouraged to contribute their time to Acterra's Arastradero Preserve Stewardship Project which conducts habitat restoration activities to restore degraded habitat and to control non-native weeds.

iii. Special Events

The City of Palo Alto incorporates sustainable themes into events throughout the year. There also opportunities to capitalize upon global events like Earth Day to promote city initiatives to residents. In 2009, council members issued an Earth Month pledge to go on a “low-carbon diet.” Residents were encouraged to make similar commitments to reduce their own household footprints.

E. Nonprofit Organizations and Community Groups

The organizations listed below are a sample of the groups working on issues related to sustainability at the city or regional level. Many of these organizations work in partnership with other groups or local government agencies.

a. Acterra

Acterra promotes local action on environmental issues through programs in environmental leadership, habitat stewardship and restoration.

b. Bay Area Climate Change Collaborative

The Bay Area Climate Change Collaborative recognizes the need for cross-sector, regional collaboration to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other best practices at the regional, State and Federal levels. The Collaborative brings together leaders from government, the business community, academia, and not-for-profit advocacy groups to address the challenge of climate change across the region to best meet these challenges and sustain our quality of life.

c. Baylands Conservation Committee

Baylands Conservation Committee is an environmental action committee focused on the Palo Alto and Midpeninsula baylands and bayfront areas.

d. Canopy: Trees for Palo Alto

Canopy advocates for the health of the urban forest, offering educational programs and planting and tree care activities.

e. Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge

The Committee's mission is to preserve the remaining wetlands in the San Francisco Bay by placing them in Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

f. CLEAN South Bay

CLEAN South Bay is focused on protecting the quality of the South San Francisco Bay and its tributary creeks and watershed.

g. Committee for Green Foothills

The Committee advocates policies to protect open spaces and natural resources, and promotes park and open space acquisition in the region.

h. Community Environmental Action Partnership

Community Environmental Action Partnership (CEAP) is a partnership between the City of Palo Alto and citizens formed to bring the various segments of the community together to share knowledge, leverage resources and create and implement environmental solutions. CEAP was formed in accordance with recommendations issued by the Green Ribbon Task Force and the Climate Protection Plan, and has an emphasis on addressing climate change.

i. Conexions: Partnerships for a Sustainable Future

Partnerships for a Sustainable Future addresses environmental, economic and social challenges through regionally-focused programs and collaborations with other organizations and institutions.

j. Environmental Volunteers

Environmental Volunteers seeks to promote understanding of and engagement with the natural environment through providing environmental education.

k. Friends of Foothills Park

The Friends of Foothills Park recruits, trains, schedules, and supervises volunteers for restoration projects at Foothills Park. The Friends concentrate on protection and preservation of native plants and removal of invasive non-natives. Some volunteers refinish park benches, build kiosks, and repaint park signs. Members also mentor high school volunteers from the Positive Alternative to Youth (PAY) program.

l. Friends of Palo Alto Parks

Friends of Palo Alto Parks provides funding for park and open space improvements.

m. Joint Venture–Silicon Valley Network Climate Protection Task Force

Formed in May 2007, the Joint Venture Climate Protection Task Force includes representatives from almost every city and county in Silicon Valley, plus several special districts and representatives from Pacific Gas and Electric and SunPower. The organization seeks to develop effective, collaborative, solutions for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from public agency operations, by providing a neutral forum for city and county government agencies and special districts to learn from each other and from others about climate protection programs.

n. Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District purchases, protects, and restores open space for habitat protection, low-impact recreation, and environmental education. The District and the City of Palo Alto collaborate on weed control training, emergency response, and property management in areas where Palo Alto's parks and the Districts properties are near one another.

o. Palo Alto Community Fund

Founded in 1979, the Community Fund funds nonprofit organizations serving the Palo Alto area. The Community Fund's focus areas include the environment, housing and nutrition and community development and social services.

p. Palo Alto Kiwanis Club

Kiwanis Club members have adopted the Baylands Duck Pond and volunteer quarterly to paint park benches, trim vegetation, plant trees, and repair trail surfaces.

q. Peninsula Astronomical Society

The Peninsula Astronomical Society provides astronomy information and sets up monthly public Star Parties in Foothill Park between May and October.

r. Peninsula Open Space Trust

The Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) has purchased 60,000 acres of permanent open space and parkland in San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties since 1977. POST uses donor funds to purchase critical open spaces and to leverage matching funds for acquisition from State and federal agencies.

s. Save the Bay

Save The Bay is the oldest and largest organization working exclusively to protect, restore and celebrate San Francisco Bay. The group and thousands of volunteers wage effective advocacy campaigns to increase public access to the Bay, establish 100,000 acres of healthy wetlands around the Bay, and protect the Bay from today's greatest threats: pollution and urban sprawl.

t. Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter

The Loma Prieta Chapter works on a wide range of issues at the local, regional and State levels, including San Francisco Bay protection, energy efficiency, mass transit and sprawl.

u. Silicon Valley Environmental Partnership

Silicon Valley Environmental Partnership (SVEP) is an initiative by Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network that promotes environmentally-sound business practices and publishes a regional report every four years on environmental indicators in Silicon Valley.

v. Silicon Valley Leadership Group

The Silicon Valley Leadership Group (SVLG) is organized to involve principal officers and senior managers of member companies in a cooperative effort with local, regional, state, and federal government officials to address major public policy issues affecting the economic health and quality of life in Silicon Valley. Current campaigns include the Climate Collaborative, Clean & Green Energy Action Plan, and Cool Commutes.

w. Sustainable Silicon Valley

Sustainable Silicon Valley (SSV) is a collaboration of businesses and government agencies and non-governmental organizations focused on improving environmental conservation and management in Silicon Valley. As its first focus, SSV has adopted the goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions in Silicon Valley by 20 percent below 1990 levels by 2010.

x. Team Spartina

Team Spartina works on the Invasive Spartina Project (ISP). The ISP is a coordinated regional effort among local, State, and federal organizations dedicated to preserving coastal resources through the elimination of introduced species of Spartina or cordgrass. The group surveys the Baylands for Spartina, provides training for herbicide contractors and marsh managers, and answers Spartina-related questions.

y. United States Department of Agriculture

The City of Palo Alto has a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) intended to protect the California clapper rail and the salt marsh harvest mouse from mammalian predators.

The USDA provides a variety of control methods to remove non-native predators when they are identified by Palo Alto staff.

z. United States Fish and Wildlife Service

The City of Palo Alto contracts with the Fish and Wildlife Service to patrol and enforce laws in the East Palo Alto section of the Baylands Nature Reserve. The Service provides staff with information on both wildlife topics and resource management of wetlands.

aa. Wildlife Rescue

Wildlife Rescue is a part of the Peninsula Humane Society and SPCA. Volunteers rescue, raise, and release sick, orphaned, or injured birds and mammals.

F. Sustainability Opportunities and Constraints

Palo Alto has made great progress toward sustainability. City government, businesses, residents and nonprofit organizations together have developed an array of plans, programs and approaches to operations that are making a difference. Palo Alto, however, continues to strive for improvement. This background report identifies the following opportunities for greater sustainability and constraints to be overcome.

a. Opportunities

The Comprehensive Plan contains numerous policies that support the City's goal of sustainability, and many of these policies are implemented by existing programs and plans. However, some Comprehensive Plan policies do not have corresponding programs or plans, and there are also programs and plans that do not relate to any policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Finally, there are issues related to sustainability that are not represented in Comprehensive Plan policies or in existing City programs or plans. The sections below summarize these gaps in the City's sustainability policies, programs and plans. These gaps offer opportunities for the City to make further progress on sustainability.

i. Comprehensive Plan Policies Without Corresponding City Programs and Plans

- ◆ The City's BMR program includes provisions to ensure the preservation of ownership BMR units, but does not include provisions for the permanent preservation of affordable *rental* units, as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan.
- ◆ While there are many child care resources available to residents of the city, there are no programs that incorporate or encourage child care or senior care facilities in development projects, as recommended in Comprehensive Plan Policy C-15.
- ◆ Policy C-25 stipulates that infrastructure improvements on public space be made only when such improvements are consistent with the goals of protecting and conserving the natural environment. There do not appear to be any City programs implementing this policy.
- ◆ The Comprehensive Plan contains a policy that addresses reducing non-point source pollution in urban runoff, but there is no accompanying implementation program.
- ◆ The Comprehensive Plan includes clear recognition of the importance of participating in regional planning activities. However, regional planning is taking on growing importance now that the State legislature has passed Senate Bill 375 requiring Metropolitan Planning Organizations to prepare Sustainable Communities Strategies. The City will need to expand its efforts to participate in regional planning as a result.

ii. City Programs and Plans Without Corresponding Comprehensive Plan Policies

- ◆ Several municipal programs encourage environmental conservation in operating practices for businesses, but there is no City policy that specifies these principles for Palo Alto companies.

- ◆ There are programs that provide subsidies for child care and energy costs for low-income households, but the Comprehensive Plan does not have policies supporting or requiring this.
- ◆ Recent plans and policies such as the Palo Alto Climate Protection Plan, the Zero Waste Operational Plan and the Green Building Ordinance provide specific opportunities for the inclusion of sustainable practices into the amended Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Amendment process also offers the City a chance to review the initiatives developed in the Climate Protection Plan and possibly adopt a more aggressive target or timeline.

iii. Sustainability Issues Not Included in Comprehensive Plan Policies or City Programs

- ◆ Palo Alto does not have policies and programs addressing local and sustainable food systems. The City should consider incorporating a Comprehensive Plan Policy that encourages increased provision and consumption of food that is grown organically or produced locally. While Palo Alto's existing community gardens program is an important component of this, the City should consider developing other programs that increase residents' access to healthy and environmentally-sound food products, and programs that make such resources available and affordable to low-income residents.
- ◆ The Comprehensive Plan also lacks a policy addressing jobs-housing balance, which is of particular concern due to the high housing costs in the city and surrounding traffic congestion.
- ◆ The City has a variety of public education programs related to sustainability, but they are not clearly called out in City policy documents. The City should review existing programs that address these activities and Public education is an important part of achieving behavioral changes, and the City can support its sustainability goal by creating or expanding programs to help residents understand the impacts of their personal choices and suggest a range of sustainable alternatives.

b. Constraints

Palo Alto has many remaining constraints to achieving sustainability. The jobs-housing imbalance, largely due to the high housing costs and shortage of affordable housing in the city, is among the most severe. The limited supply of affordable housing causes many low- and moderate-income people employed in Palo Alto to live outside the city and endure longer commutes to get to work. While the City has several policies and programs supporting the development of affordable housing, providing sufficient housing affordable to Palo Alto's workforce remains a major challenge.

The City should review its inclusionary housing program to determine whether its objectives are being met and whether the City can increase the number of affordable units developed by changing regulations of the program. For example, the City may want to review the location of units developed under Title 16.7 of the Municipal Code to ensure that affordable housing is distributed throughout the city. The City should also review the in-lieu fees option under Title 16.7 to ensure that the fee is set high enough to cover the costs of financing and constructing new units.