



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PARKS AND SUSTAINABILITY
COMMISSION REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 12/01/2025

ITEM NO: 4

DATE: November 26, 2025
TO: Parks and Sustainability Commission
FROM: Nicolle Burnham, Parks and Public Works Director
SUBJECT: Forward a Recommendation to Town Council Regarding a Proposed Policy for Adopting Town Assets

RECOMMENDATION:

Forward a recommendation to the Town Council regarding a proposed policy for adoption of Town assets.

BACKGROUND:

The Parks and Public Works Department has run an “adopt a bench” program for many years. There is no known written policy or procedure for this program. In 2024 staff recommended, and the Town Manager agreed, that the program be placed on hold to allow for development of a policy to guide implementation of the program.

Throughout 2024 and 2025 staff have worked to map the location of all benches within Town owned open spaces and parks and on streets. Each bench has been geolocated and added to the Town’s asset management system and GIS database. The type of bench has been documented. In the case of adopted benches, the plaque inscription has been recorded.

Staff also reviewed all available records associated with adopted benches and conducted outreach to request that anyone who adopted a bench contact Parks and Public Works. The intent is to develop complete records of the adopted benches to the maximum extent possible. This research was discussed with the Parks and Sustainability Commission at its meeting of October 6, 2025.

DISCUSSION:

Staff has developed a policy (Attachment 1) to guide future adoption of Town assets. While the current need is for a policy regarding benches, it is possible this program might be expanded in the future to allow donation to support picnic tables, barbeque pits, and other assets. To accommodate this potential future need the policy was written to apply more broadly.

PREPARED BY: Nicolle Burnham
Director, Parks and Public Works

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SUBJECT: Make a Recommendation to Town Council Regarding a Policy to Adopt Town Assets

DATE: November 26, 2025

CONCLUSION:

Staff is seeking feedback from the Parks and Sustainability about the draft policy and for a recommendation that the policy be brought to Town Council for consideration.

Attachments

1. Draft Policy: Adoption of Town Assets



Title: Adoption of Assets on Town Owned Property		Policy Number:
Effective Date:		Pages:
Enabling Actions:	Revised Date:	
Approved:		

PURPOSE

This policy defines the criteria for adopting assets located in Town owned properties.

SCOPE

This policy may apply to benches, trees, picnic tables, and other assets within town owned spaces for which the Department of Parks and Public Works have developed and established an adoption program and for which Town Council has adopted a fee. This policy does not apply to the planters in the Downtown area.

With respect to assets identified in the scope of this policy, this policy takes precedence over Policy 2-17 "Solicitations and Donation"; and Resolution No. 1996-133 "Naming of Town Owned Facilities" since these policies do not include specific guidelines to address these amenities. This policy governs commemorative amenities and does not modify naming requirements for structures, buildings, or large park features governed by Resolution 1996-133.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

Adoptable Asset: A physical amenity such as a bench, tree, picnic table or other Town-approved site furnishing.

Dedication Term: The time period during which the plaque and dedication remain in place.

Director: The Director of Parks and Public Works or their designee.

Donor: The individual or family financially sponsoring installation and plaque recognition.

Town Owned Spaces: may include parks, streets, sidewalks or other areas where adoptable assets may exist.

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POLICY

The Policy is designed to allow the public to honor people or events in their lives and provide long-lasting beautification to Los Gatos owned spaces. Through this program, any individual, family, business, or community group can provide a donation to adopt assets within a Town park or other Town property. Adoption of assets is permitted only if the Department of Parks and Public Works has mapping of the assets, has identified which assets are available for adoption, and has a proscribed application form available for that amenity.

The Department of Parks and Public Works will accept donations for assets that commemorate or recognize a person provided that all provisions of this Policy are met. Recognition is limited to individuals or families with a documented connection to the Town of Los Gatos. No organizations or groups will be considered. Only one asset shall be dedicated to any single person or family, unless there is a compelling reason for additional dedications as shall be determined by the Director of Parks and Public Works or staff designated by the Director.

The Director of Parks and Public Works or staff designated by the Director shall establish a procedure for applying to adopt assets and has the authority to approve or deny any adoption donation.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures shall be followed for the adoption of Town assets identified in this policy.

Assets for Adoption: The Town will identify the location and classes of assets available for adoption. The Town will purchase a standard item (bench, table, etc.) and plaque to maintain consistency through the park system and to ensure quality. Following installation, all assets will be recorded in the Town's asset management system software. This will serve to track the installation date and maintenance history of the asset.

Location of Adoptable Assets: Asset locations and adoption status will be available via publicly accessible GIS mapping tools maintained by PPW. Adopted assets will be positioned to maximize their benefit to an area. The number of assets will be limited so as to not interfere with normal use or maintenance operations of the area. The Town reserves the right to limit or prescribe asset locations as determined by the Director of Parks and Public Works. The Town reserves the right to remove any assets that have

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been damaged, and which are, in the view of Town staff, beyond repair. The Town accepts no liability for damages to any asset from vandals or third parties.

Plaques: A bronze dedication plaque with a personalized inscription will be mounted on or near each adopted asset. The standard dedication plaque dimensions are determined by the Director. Sentiment on the plaque shall be one of the following selected by donor:

- *The Town of Los Gatos recognizes and appreciates _____ (Donor Name) for their donation of this _____ (type of asset) in memory of _____ (Honoree Name).*
- *The Town recognizes and appreciates _____ (Name) for their donation of this _____ (type of asset).*
- *The Town recognizes and appreciates the donation of this _____ (type of asset) in memory of _____ (Name).*
- *In memory of _____ (Name). (Recommended for longer names)*

Upon installation, all assets and plaques will become the property of the Town of Los Gatos and will be maintained by the Parks and Public Works Department. The donor does not have any claim to ownership of the donated asset or the plaque.

Term of Dedication: The asset dedication will have a term of 10 years with one 10-year renewal option. Should the original applicant decline to rededicate the asset or fail to notify the Department of Parks and Public Works of an intent to rededicate an existing asset within 60 days of the expiration date of the original 10-year term, the applicant will be contacted to pick up the commemorative plaque from the Town. The retired asset will not be available to the applicant and will be reused or recycled.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or their designated representative to retrieve the removed plaque within 60 days after the end of the agreement. The maximum term for any single memorial asset is 20 years, after which time the asset may be removed (if applicable), or retained but reallocated for adoption by another party.

Maintenance: During the 10-year term, or 20-year term with additional re-dedication, the Department of Parks and Public Works will provide routine maintenance of the asset. The Town is not obligated to replace the asset or plaque if destroyed due to vandalism, accident, or natural event unless the sponsor chooses to pay market value for time and material costs at the time of the event to replace the asset.

Fee: The fee for the installation and maintenance of each asset for the 10-year adoption period shall be set by the Town Council through the Fee Schedule located here: <https://www.losgatosca.gov/1252/Comprehensive-Fee-Schedule> . The fee shall

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include all costs for procurement and installation of the asset and associated plaque, including concrete pads and footings (if required), material costs of the asset and plaque and staff time to procure and install the asset, plus 10-year sponsorship of the donated asset. An additional ten-year term can be acquired for a renewal fee as set by Town Council at the expiration of the first ten-year agreement. Costs will adjust annually. No refunds will be given for payments made.

Approval Process: The applicant must submit an application to the Towns Parks and Public Works Department. Applications are processed on January 1st and July 1st of each year. Applications received between those times will be held for batch processing on the dates noted. The Director will review and approve or deny the proposed adoption and plaque. Town staff will order the asset and plaque and perform the installation.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Gabrielle Whelan, Town Attorney