



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 06/16/2026

ITEM NO: 22

DATE: June 16, 2026
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Chris Constantin, Town Manager
SUBJECT: **Adopt a Resolution Approving the Proposed Fee Schedule for the Adopt-a-Bench Program for Fiscal Year 2026-27**

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a resolution establishing a fee for the Adopt-a-Bench Program in the amount of \$9,865.00 for the initial 10-year term and \$5,911.00 for each subsequent 10-year renewal term, or in such other amounts as determined by the Town Council.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The recommended action will ensure fees provide for the recovery of costs associated with Town services in accordance with the Town's financial policies, to the extent authorized by the Town Council. The fee of \$9,865.00 for an initial 10-year period is intended to achieve full cost recovery for the Adopt-a-Bench Program and reflects the estimated costs associated with bench procurement, installation, administrative coordination, and long-term maintenance over the ten-year adoption period. Adoption of the proposed fee would reduce or eliminate reliance on the General Fund subsidy for the program.

If approved, staff will incorporate the authorized recommendation into the Town's FY 2026–27 Comprehensive Fee Schedule. If the Town Council elects to establish a fee below full cost recovery, the remaining program costs would be subsidized through existing Parks and Public Works operating resources.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

This item aligns with the Town's Strategic Priority to develop a structure to ensure accountability of how funding resources move forward the Town's core goals and priorities and

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Parks and Public Works Director

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Administrative Services Director

aligns with the core goal of Fiscal Stability. The item ensures that the Adopt-A-Bench Program does not create a financial burden to the Department or rely on a subsidy from the General Fund. Without this adjustment, the program would continue to shift costs associated with private memorialization of benches to the broader community.

BACKGROUND:

On February 3, 2026, the Town Council unanimously approved a Council Policy entitled “Adoption of Assets on Town-Owned Property” with minor amendments to the language related to messages that may be included on dedication plaques. At that time, staff indicated that the immediate interest was in defining the Adopt-a-Bench Program and that fees for the program would be proposed with the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Comprehensive Fee Schedule.

On April 7, 2026, the Town Council adopted the Comprehensive Fee Schedule for Fiscal Year 2026-27. The motion included the following language *“to pull the Adopt-a-Bench fee until [Council] receive(s) further information from staff on two things: historical pricing practices for the program; and evaluation of potential lower-cost alternatives.”*

Notice of this hearing was posted on May 29, 2026, and June 5, 2026, consistent with the legal requirements associated with the development and implementation of municipal fees and charges. A copy of the fee calculation (Attachment 2) was made available for review at the Town Clerk’s office on June 5, 2026 fulfilling the requirement for public posting 10 days in advance of the hearing.

DISCUSSION:

Historical Context

Historically, bench adoption fees were based on underestimated cost assumptions. Previous pricing was approximately \$3,500 for the bench, \$150 for installation, and \$150 to cover 10 years of maintenance. This pricing structure did not accurately account for staff labor, material costs, administrative oversight, or long-term upkeep. No formal cost analysis had previously been completed, and the fees had not been formally adopted as part of the Town’s Comprehensive Fee Schedule.

Basis for Proposed Fee

Attachment 2 provides a current detailed cost breakdown, including installation labor and materials, administrative time, bench and plaque costs, and a 10-year maintenance projection. The bench and plaque pricing reflects supplier quotes as of March 2026.

The proposed fee of \$9,865 represents the full, all-inclusive costs:

- Bench procurement and plaque fabrication;
- Installation labor and materials;

- Administrative coordination and program management; and
- Estimated maintenance and repair costs over the ten-year adoption period.

Two standard bench types are used in the Town's public spaces: steel and recycled material. The cost of the steel bench manufactured by Dumor is \$4,870, and the recycled bench is \$2,093. The steel benches are used in the downtown area, while the recycled material benches are used in all other public spaces. While lower-cost bench products may be available, use of standardized bench types reduces long-term maintenance complexity, improves replacement consistency, and provides the durability required in high-use public spaces.

In establishing the proposed fee, staff blended the cost of the two benches to provide one fee for the program. If an adopter selects a bench location that is not in need of replacement, then the actual cost of the bench will be deducted from the fee charged, as noted in the Comprehensive Fee Schedule considered on April 7, 2026. Renewal fees reflect ongoing maintenance, administrative coordination, and refurbishment costs because the initial bench procurement cost has already been incurred.

Maintenance needs are based on an estimated average of two staff hours per bench per year, covering routine cleaning, graffiti and vandalism repair, minor fixes, and periodic repainting for cast-iron style. Actual maintenance may vary based on location (for example, under trees producing sap) or by adoptee request, which does occur with existing adopted benches.

Lower Cost Alternatives

The Town has bench standards for public spaces that were established based on durability and functionality. The standard benches are well suited for the heavy use and wear and tear of public spaces. Using standard bench styles provides aesthetic consistency, and allows bulk purchase of benches and of the maintenance and repair materials, generating long term cost savings.

Benches and other furniture that is used in public spaces must balance affordability with durability. Residential style benches that may be purchased at retail establishments, while almost certainly of lower cost, are not constructed to withstand the wear and tear of use in a public space. Using lower quality benches would increase risk to the Town. Lower quality assets will require additional staff time for maintenance or, failing adequate staff time, increase liability to the Town if a bench were to fail during use.

In terms of alternatives, the City of San José uses pre-cast concrete benches from Outdoor Creations (www.outdoorcreations.com) as a park standard. These benches are approximately \$2,500 per bench which is more costly than the recycled benches the Town uses in parks. Outdoor Creations provides a one-year warranty on materials and workmanship for their pre-cast concrete items.

Other jurisdictions evaluated by staff generally use some type of Dumor bench, which is the same manufacturer used by the Town for the downtown area. Dumor products are considered among the best quality for public use. Dumor backs their product with a 20-year warranty on steel benches and a ten-year warranty on recycled plastic products.

Specifically, Saratoga uses an aluminum and recycled plastic Dumor bench. The current pricing on these ranges from \$1,750 to \$2,970 (plus shipping and taxes); less costly than the all metal standard used by the Town of Los Gatos, but similar in price to benches used outside of downtown.

Other jurisdictions use the same or similar Dumor steel bench as the one used by Los Gatos, suggesting the cost of bench purchase in the other jurisdictions is similar to that of Los Gatos.

Attachment 2 demonstrates that the cost of the Town standard benches represents 20% to 50% of the proposed total fee. The remaining fee represents the staff costs to manage the adoption program, coordinate language on the plaques, ordering of the benches and plaques, installing the benches, and maintaining the benches over the 10-year life of adoption.

CONCLUSION:

This updated fee structure is designed to support full cost recovery for Parks and Public Works, ensuring that the Adopt-A-Bench Program does not create a financial burden to the Department or rely on a subsidy from the General Fund. Without this adjustment, the program would continue to shift costs associated with private memorialization of benches to the broader community.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Town Council may choose to establish a fee below full cost recovery as a policy decision. In that case, a portion of program costs would continue to be supported through Town operational resources. Table 1 provides a comparison of adopt-a-bench fees charged by nearby agencies and jurisdictions.

Table 1. Comparison of Adopt-a-Bench Fees for Nearby Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction Name	Current Fee (as of May 1, 2026)
Santa Clara County	\$3,050
Midpenninsula Regional Open Space District	\$5,000
Saratoga	\$7,500

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Dublin	\$2,500
East Bay Regional Parks	\$5,000
San José Parks Foundation	\$5,000
Campbell	Cost of Bench

Town Council may establish the Adopt-a-Bench fee for the initial ten-year term and for each subsequent ten-year renewal in amounts other than those presented by staff. If this alternative is selected the Town Council can direct staff and the Town Attorney to finalize the resolution with the Council recommended amounts.

One alternative proposal would be to define the fees for this program as follows:

- Bench: At cost
- Initial 10-Year Adoption: (As determined by Town Council)
- Renewal after Initial 10-year Period: (As determined by Town Council)

This alternative would ensure that the Town is not subsidizing the bench cost and would allow for more targeted subsidy of staff time. This would also allow transparency for Town Council with respect to the specific amount of staff subsidy being provided.

COORDINATION:

This report was coordinated with the Town Clerk, Town Attorney, and Administrative Services Director.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

Attachments:

1. Resolution for Adopt-a-Bench Fee – Staff Proposal
2. Adopt-a-Bench Fee Calculation