



# Saratoga in Bloom

# 2016

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## **Special Thanks**

City of Saratoga  
Inn at Saratoga  
Serenio Group

# 2016 MUNICIPAL INFORMATION

Population: 30,887	City Website: <a href="http://www.saratoga.ca.us">www.saratoga.ca.us</a>
City Contact Name: Manny Cappello, Mayor	AIB Committee Chair Contact: Jill Hunter
Town Area in Square Miles: 12.6	Acres of Active Recreation: 111
Acres of Passive Recreation: 728	Do You Have a Volunteer Coordinator? Yes



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

2016 MUNICIPAL Information .....	2
Introduction .....	5
Prologue .....	9
Floral Displays .....	9
Municipal .....	9
Business.....	9
Residential.....	10
Community Involvement .....	10
Landscaped Areas .....	11
Municipal .....	11
Business and Residential.....	12
Community Involvement .....	12
Urban Forestry .....	12
Municipal .....	13
Leadership.....	13
Legal Protection of Saratoga Trees .....	13
Business.....	14
Residential.....	14
Community Involvement .....	15
Environmental Effort.....	15
Municipal .....	15
Business.....	16
Residential.....	17
Community Involvement .....	17
Educational Environmental Programs .....	17
Heritage.....	18
Municipal .....	18
Leadership.....	18
Legal protection of heritage sites .....	19

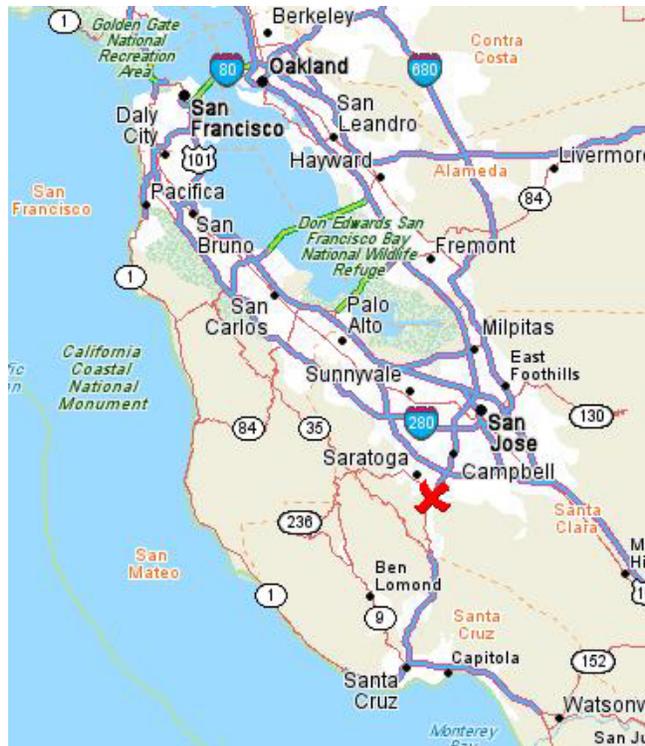
Resource availability .....	19
Business.....	19
Conservation restoration and rehabilitation .....	19
Participation in heritage and cultural activities .....	19
Residential.....	19
Conservation restoration and rehabilitation .....	19
Participation in heritage and cultural activities .....	19
Community Involvement .....	19
Heritage Days- Early Fall .....	20
Blossom Festival- Early Spring – see Best Idea .....	20
Memorial Day Celebration.....	20
History Foundation and History Museum Volunteers .....	20
Overall Impression .....	20
Community Involvement .....	22
Best Idea- - Blossom Festival.....	24
Acknowledgements.....	25
Contacts .....	25
Tour and Itinerary .....	26

# INTRODUCTION



## HISTORY AND CULTURE OF SARATOGA

Located in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains, approximately 26 miles east of the Pacific Coast, 10 miles southwest of San Jose, and 50 miles south of San Francisco, the City of Saratoga runs along the western edge of Santa Clara County. Although the incorporated City of Saratoga dates back only to 1956, the town had its beginning more than a century earlier when William Campbell built a sawmill here in 1848, about two and one-half miles above the present downtown village, along what is now State Highway 9. Having spent the winter of 1846/47 in the abandoned adobe buildings of Mission Santa Clara, Campbell correctly surmised that the settlers who were beginning to come to the Santa Clara Valley would want to build sturdy wood houses, reminiscent of the homes they had left in the East.



With this belief, William Campbell started a sawmill operation along the stream here in 1847. It was delayed however after another millwright constructing a sawmill at the western base of the Sierra mountains a hundred and fifty miles north east found gold flakes in the American River, touching off the 1849 California Gold Rush. While no such discovery occurred here, there were later reports of copper and silver deposits in the region. Instead, for more than half a century,

the wealth of the local mountains was in timber, mostly redwood, and the settlement that later became Saratoga owes its start to that wealth.



In 1850, Martin McCarty leased the sawmill Campbell had started, and set about to improve its access by building a road to the site. To recoup his investment, McCarty erected a tollgate near the present intersection of Third Street and Big Basin Way, and charged a fee for

the use of the road. It was common practice in those early days for roads to be built on a private-enterprise basis, then after a period of time, the counties would take them over and maintain them as public thoroughfares. In McCarty's case, although the tollgate was used for only about a year, it was sufficient for the settlement to be known as Tollgate for some years afterward.



Due to the natural resources in the area, the town had a brief industrial era. With the abundance of lumber products, a tannery and paper mills were built along the stream, as well as several flour mills, and a furniture factory in town. Due to the collection of mills, the settlement's post office was given the name of Bank Mills in 1863. Shortly thereafter, the discovery of local mineral springs with a chemical content similar to that of Congress Spring at Saratoga Springs, New York, led to the renaming of the

settlement to Saratoga in 1865.

In the latter part of the 1800's, the area's fertile soil and available land saw the emergence of another industry - agriculture. Apricots, cherries and French prunes were particularly well-suited to Saratoga's soil and climate. During the late 1880's, the hillsides were found to be conducive to viticulture and many wineries were established. In 1890, Saratoga became the home of the world-renowned Paul Masson Winery. Convinced that the rich California soil could produce grapes for champagnes comparable to those of France, the French immigrant Masson brought grape cuttings from his native land to plant on the hillsides.



Saratoga developed into a pleasant village as it became the trading center for the surrounding fruit-growing farms. The mountain setting and mild climate also made Saratoga a popular resort area. The elaborate resort hotel Pacific Congress Springs, flourished for almost forty years about two miles above the village, until it was destroyed by fire in 1903. The resort image lingered through succeeding years, even as agriculture became the dominant industry in Saratoga and the Santa Clara Valley.

During the early 1900's, Saratoga had an enviable reputation as a highly desirable place to live. The Interurban Rapid Transit of the day began service which connected Saratoga with the rest of the Santa Clara Valley and beyond. Saratoga soon became a haven for wealthy San Franciscans who came to build elegant hillside homes overlooking the lush valley. One of these was the palatial Mediterranean-style home of the United States Senator James Phelan. His Villa Montalvo is now a center for the cultural arts.



After World War II, the valley's rapid urbanization changed the character of Saratoga from agricultural to suburban. As space technology and the defense and electronics industries were established in nearby communities, Saratoga's open land soon became more valuable for homes for the rapidly growing population, than it was for fruit orchards, although some vineyards and a few scattered orchards do remain as a

reminder of the bygone era. The City of Saratoga strives to maintain these elements of its natural beauty and colorful past through careful zoning policies and historic preservation.

Public interest was stirred to new heights in the mid-1950s when, with orchards giving way to subdivisions, the annexation designs of the City of San Jose became obvious. As a result of this concern, Saratogans voted to incorporate in 1956 and to establish their own city government.

### **Saratoga Today**

The City of Saratoga, as it exists today, is an attractive residential community of 30,887 (January 1, 2014) known for its excellent schools and prestigious neighborhoods. The community's historic downtown



district known as the Village has distinctive dining, unique shops, and numerous buildings dating back to the late 1800's and early 1900's. Saratoga residents place an emphasis on historical preservation, and on retaining the quality of the City's semi-rural ambiance. The City also is home to Villa Montalvo, the former home of Senator James Duval Phelan which hosts an art gallery, an artist in residence program, concert performances, park trails and grounds. Another local gem is the former Paul Masson homestead and winery in the Saratoga foothills, now known as the "Mountain Winery". This high-end event venue features world-

class concerts each spring and summer. And Hakone Gardens, as shown in the picture, is the oldest Japanese-style residential garden in the Western Hemisphere. The garden is maintained and run by the Hakone Foundation, and lies just outside of the Village offering classes, festivals, and Japanese culture.

### **City Government**

The City of Saratoga was incorporated in 1956 and operates under a Council/Manager form of government. The City government receives most of its revenue from property tax, although the City's share of property tax receipts is only about 5.45% of the 1% assessment Saratoga property owners pay. This "low tax" status limits the City to providing minimal services to its residents. Staffing is low for a city this size (51.90 FTE) with many services provided on contract.

In addition, with the relatively late incorporation of the City after the community had developed, many school districts and utility districts were already in place, meaning more than one pre-existing district may serve within City of Saratoga boundaries. Public safety services are provided by other governmental organizations, including the Santa Clara County Fire Department through property tax allocation agreements, and by the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office by City contract. Animal control services are contracted with the City of San Jose.

The City's departments are structured by function, and include Public Works – which oversees City infrastructure maintenance and projects, Community Development – which guides the physical growth of the City through planning, zoning, and building inspection, Recreation and Facilities – which provides recreation programs and maintains City facilities, Administrative Services – which provides oversight and support for the City's financial, administrative, and technology operations, and the City Manager's Department – which provides oversight and guidance for City functions, as well as legislative and administrative support for the City Council and Commissions.

## **Transportation**

Saratoga is part of a comprehensive transportation network that links the City to other Silicon Valley cities and beyond through roadways, bikeways, and mass transit systems, including the bus and light rail systems, the CalTrain system, and to the Mineta International Airport in San Jose. Bus routes provide inter-city transportation needs with access to the Village, schools, the community college, and local office and shopping markets. Highway 85 runs through Saratoga, providing linkage to other area freeways and major cities. San Francisco is 47 miles north, and Santa Cruz is about 26 miles southwest. The tourist havens of Monterey and Carmel are approximately 65 and 73 miles south of Saratoga, respectively.

## **Schools**

The City of Saratoga is served by 6 different schools districts, which include Saratoga Union School District, Cupertino Union School District, Campbell Union School District, Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District, Campbell Union High School District, and Fremont Union High School District.

The schools in these districts that serve Saratoga residents are among the best in the nation. Saratoga High School and Monte Vista High School have been ranked by U.S. News & World Report within the top 100 schools in the country.

## **City of Saratoga Statement of Values**

The City of Saratoga strives to maintain a high quality of life for its residents through careful planning and infrastructure maintenance, through activities to build community, and by providing opportunities for extensive citizen participation in community issues. Succinctly, the statement of values for our City:

### **Saratoga is a Community**

- Where the common good prevails;
- Where the natural beauty of the City and its hillsides is preserved;
- Where historic assets are preserved and promoted;
- Where local commerce provides a vibrant presence in the Village and the other commercial areas;
- Where the orientation is toward the family;
- Where homes and neighborhoods are safe and peaceful;
- Where government is inclusive and values community involvement;
- Where desirable recreational and leisure opportunities are provided;
- Where quality education is provided and valued;
- Where value is placed on an attractive, well maintained and well planned community;
- Where government provides high quality, basic services in a cost effective manner;
- Where a small town, picturesque, residential atmosphere is retained;
- Where the arts and cultural activities which serve the community and the region are promoted;
- Where neighbors work together for the common good;
- Where leadership reflects community goals; and
- Where, because of the forgoing, the citizens and the families of Saratoga can genuinely enjoy being a part of and proud of this special community.

# PROLOGUE

Throughout this report some items may be repeated because our City’s events, our community involvement from residents, business, government, and civic organizations, the City’s overall tidiness and beauty, and its traditions have perspectives and highlights applicable to many sections. The *italics* indicate continuing improvements as well actions taken in response to judges’ suggestions last year.

## FLORAL DISPLAYS

Saratogans place a strong emphasis on drought tolerant plants as seen in the plantings throughout the city. In keeping with the overall unique feel of the Village, the Village Gardeners and merchants are encouraged to come up with their own planting schemes. *As America in Bloom judges suggested, we adopted a city flower, the red geranium, as it does well in our climate. “Saratoga loves the Red Geranium and the Red Geranium loves Saratoga”.*



### Municipal

Saratoga’s Public Works Department maintains plantings and floral displays throughout the City. The medians, City Hall, the Gateway, and Blaney Plaza bloom abundantly with a range of water-wise flowering perennials like roses, jasmine, lantana, and society garlic. *We have embraced the theme of red geraniums especially in the village. Hardy perennials such as the geranium are the backbone of the plantings throughout the city.*



### Business

The village has a very eclectic feel as reflected in the plantings and floral displays. Many business owners and landlords create beautiful floral displays in window boxes, gardens, planters, and tree wells. Even many of the side alleys feature bright flowers and flowering bushes.

Merchants in the village are very appreciative as well as supportive of the Village Gardeners by providing access to water sources, maintaining their own plantings, and making monetary contributions for supplies. The Village Gardeners in turn recognize these outstanding business owners by awarding

them “**The Golden Broom Award**” for their continued support. Shopping areas such as Argonaut and Quito Centers also provide beautiful displays throughout the year.



## Residential

Private residences are well landscaped and many homes have lovely floral displays in their front yards to be enjoyed by all. *In celebration of the city flower, the Village Gardeners have organized a contest to bring awareness to our red geranium. If weather permits, the winner of the home that has created the most exceptional display of red geraniums will be announced on April 29<sup>th</sup> and be part of the judges tour.*

## Community Involvement

The Village Gardeners volunteer group formed 11 years ago by Jill Hunter now has over fifty members. The goal of the group has always been to enhance the historic Village through the use of floral displays in the many tree wells, hanging baskets, and in over one hundred urns and pots that grace the area. While some of the volunteers have adopted specific tree wells and areas, the group as a whole meets once a week to water, plant



*Village Gardeners at Work*

and do general maintenance where needed. The Village Gardeners can be seen in action throughout the year on Facebook at Saratoga Village Gardeners/ Saratoga in Bloom.

There are many other volunteer gardening groups in Saratoga that maintain our churches, schools and public places such as Hakone Garden, the history museum park, Book-go-around, and Montalvo Art Center.

*The Village Gardeners and the Department of Public Works have reworked the hanging baskets, lowering them to improve visibility, repotting them with more bird-proof and drought tolerant materials and adding our new city flower, the red geranium.*



# LANDSCAPED AREAS

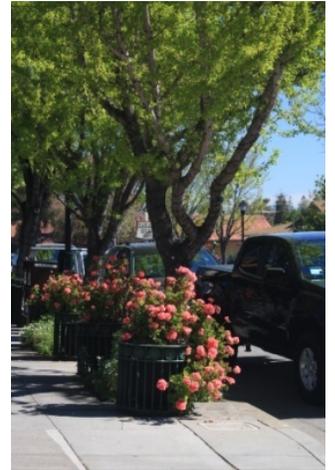
*Saratoga landscape is best defined as informal plantings in treed natural settings, taking advantage of water wise and native vegetation.*

## Municipal

The City maintains landscaped medians throughout the City that add color and beauty along Saratoga’s arterial streets including the three main roads leading into the Village and the median on Fruitvale Avenue.

In 2012, residents, West Valley College, and the City collaborated to plant oaks and drought tolerant plants on this beautiful rolling avenue.

Signs added to the planting highlight the entrances to Saratoga.



Highway 9 to Los Gatos is a designated State Scenic Highway. *The City worked with the State of California to add plantings, benches, a walkway, and spring native flowers were seeded.*

In 2014 the City of Saratoga completed construction of the Village Pedestrian Enhancement Project for purposes of pedestrian safety and landscape improvements. The following improvements were made:

- Crosswalk with in-pavement lights adjacent to Starbucks
- Blaney Plaza improvements including electrical, landscape upgrades, safety fence, and Wi-Fi
- Blaney Plaza “Spur Road” decorative concrete paving
- Sidewalk and street light pole improvements along the “Spur Road”
- Museum signage and drinking fountain at the Saratoga Historical Park
- Bus shelter at Saratoga Avenue
- GFI electrical outlet upgrades for the tree lights along Big Basin Way
- Signage including Village Merchant directory

### **Blaney Plaza prior to improvements** ↓



**New design allows pedestrian safety, community involvement such as Wednesday Farmers Market, and improvement of the landscaping.** →

The City has a \$4M grant from the Valley Transit Authority to plant oaks and drought tolerant plants along the Prospect Road median. Work will begin shortly.

## Business and Residential

While there is no major industry, the Village and City are populated by many small businesses whose proprietors are also residents and are heavily invested in our landscape. Business owners in the Village support the planting of flowers in the tree wells and pots on Big Basin Way financially and through sweeping their store fronts. The Argonaut Shopping Center refreshes its landscaping seasonally.

Many wineries and beautiful vineyards adorn the hills of Saratoga as our climate is highly suitable for vineyards. Wine tasting rooms from these wineries are common in the Village.

The streets are wide, with few sidewalks, and no street lights. Residents maintain their own trees and landscapes. Tidy yards are expected and many people have gardeners.

Saratoga has 17 designated Landscape and Lighting Districts where residents have voted for additional taxation to maintain their public areas.

## Community Involvement

There are many incidents where Saratoga neighbors have banded together to beautify City green space as is evident on citizen adopted areas on Hwy 9, Fruitvale Avenue, El Quito, and Douglass Lane.

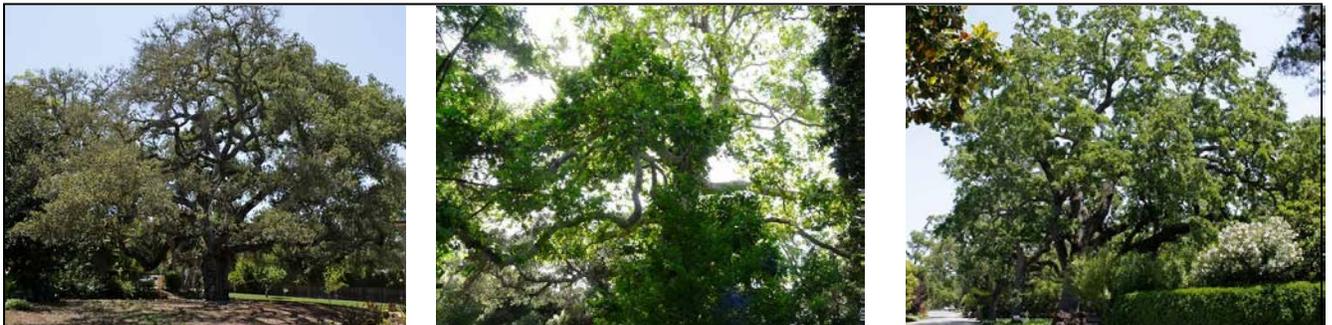
*Citizens are active within their churches assisting as needed. An example is the refinishing of the benches on Big Basin Way by Saratoga Federated Church.*

*A group of volunteers meet weekly to pick up garbage along Highway 9, and have been doing this for years.*

*The Saratoga Elementary School on Oak Street has a garden for the children to learn about growing food, and is run by volunteers.*

## URBAN FORESTRY

*Saratoga has a beautiful tree canopy that is amplified by the fact that the city has a no buildings taller than 2 stories. The tree canopy coverage is approximately 40%, especially notable in such a dry climate. Saratoga won “Best Tree Canopy” at the AIB 2015 Awards ceremony.*



## Municipal

### Leadership

Saratoga is primarily a residential community where the economic values of properties are closely tied to the rural attractiveness of the City, much of which is attributable to the trees. The intent of the City's Tree Regulations is to provide a sustainable urban forest and to balance the rights of property owners with basic standards for the maintenance, removal and replacement of trees.

Saratoga employs an Arborist who approves the trimming and removal of all trees through a permit process. The City Arborist files penalties for non permitted removal of trees or excessive trimming of trees. The penalties collected are available to plant new trees throughout Saratoga. All those who do tree trimming must have a City Business License. Information is available on the City's web site to assist residents with the native oaks.

As part of the City Risk Management Program, an inspection schedule for City trees was established. As trees are visually assessed on an ongoing basis, trimming may be scheduled at any time if brought to the City's attention. *The City has also planted trees at City Hall in memory of City Council members who have passed away.*

The Village has over 75 tree wells illuminated with LED lights and in Fall the foliage from those trees puts on its own light show. *Eight varieties of trees were planted to ensure that disease will not attack every tree.*

*The Parks and Recreation Commission has placed bird houses in designated parks to encourage the continuation of bird species.*

### Legal Protection of Saratoga Trees

Permits (including a City Arborist inspection) are required for residential removing and replacing trees.

Every tree in every park is inventoried by number and species and inspected regularly.

The City of Saratoga amended the Residential Landscaping Regulation to a Water Efficient Landscaping Regulation. *The regulations cover new and retrofitted landscapes with water efficiency standards, with more efficient systems, grey water usage, on site storm water capture and limiting the amount of turf planted.*

In 2007, Saratoga received Tree City USA designation. The 2015 by 2015 Program established 6 years ago was a resounding success. In just one year all 2015 trees were planted by residents who took up the challenge.

In 2015, Saratoga lost the historic 100 year old Stone Pine in

**Village in Fall**



**Heritage Stone Pine in Blaney Plaza**



*Blaney Plaza. Until we replant a tree in its place, we will fill the area with a floral display that compliments the rest of the plaza.*

**Heritage Preservation Commission** maintains a list of Heritage trees, many of which have been submitted by the citizens of Saratoga who wish to recognize the array of majestic trees in Saratoga.

Heritage Tree Criteria:

- 1) Specimen is outstanding, healthy with good structure, shows potential for long life.
- 2) Distinct because of age, size, species or location.
- 3) Historically important and/or relative to: agriculture, social, cultural, aesthetic, educational or economic aspects of the community.

Citizens of Saratoga are appointed to the **Parks and Recreation Commission** whose mission is to oversee the planning, acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks, trails, and other recreational areas and facilities.

The 14 City Parks and trails are maintained by the City. *Our newest, Quarry Park, opened in October 2015, and is a multi-phase project in Saratoga which will link Hakone Gardens to Sanborn Park, and eventually enable residents to hike from Saratoga to the Sea by linking with other established trails through the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Pacific Coast. This 64 acre park features trails, picnic areas, and interpretive signs on the park's history and natural features, restrooms, and parking.*

*While all parks in Saratoga have disability access, the City **Youth Commission** recently began a project to provide features to enhance the enjoyment for our handicapped youth.*

## Business

West Valley College's design demonstrates open spaces with the native trees amongst the expansive low profile community college.

There are native plantings throughout the college campus, and it was designed to preserve extensive old valley oaks along the walkways. Residents exercise through the college trails with their dogs on off hours.

*Madronia Cemetery is in the process of making the cemetery an arboretum. An inventory of the many varieties of splendid trees has been taken and markers will indicate the name of the trees.*

## Residential

The Heritage Orchard surrounds the Saratoga Library with open space at the corner of Saratoga Avenue and Fruitvale Avenue. The Heritage Orchard is a reminder of the area's agricultural past and has been maintained by the Novakovich family since 1970. A path winds through the orchard connecting the Library with Redwood Middle School and West Valley College. Novakovich Orchard covers 6 acres and produces local grown fruits and vegetables.

Cooper Garrod Land Trust: Saratoga residents and farmers grew apricots and prunes, built an Equestrian Center, and a Winery,

**Heritage Orchard**



and farmed the land for more than 120 years.

In 2012, 120 acres of privately held forested land was acquired by the Mid Peninsula Open Space District to preserve the natural landscape, followed later by the acquisition of another 40 acres of forest land to Long Ridge Open Space.

## Community Involvement

San Jose City Forest has assisted residents with group tree plantings. The residents of certain neighborhoods have opted to use tax return dollars to request trees to beautify the streets. Ell Quito is an excellent example.

*Volunteer groups have been involved in the new Quarry Park's maintenance. Leaders have been trained to lead groups of citizens who wish to work and help maintain the City's newest park. The Boys Scout troops have also helped with weeding and other maintenance activities at the Quarry Park.*

Arbor Day celebration includes the planting of a tree and distributing free trees for planting. Poster contests have been run throughout the schools to demonstrate the benefit of trees.

13 oak trees were planted on Prospect Road, the site of the new median project.

Many people "buy" memorial trees and benches at a reduced rate, which beautifies and helps provide funds for other projects. For example, the Saratoga High School Class of 1974 planted a memorial Crepe Myrtle tree in the inner quad of the high school and 18 oaks were planted on Fruitvale Avenue in memory of Katherine Holt. This is part of the City's Tree and Bench Dedication Program to commemorate a loved one.

Volunteers for Hakone have planted 12 cherry trees donated by Saratoga's sister city, Muko-shi, Japan.

The Heritage Tree Society of Saratoga, a group formed by residents of Saratoga, has identified dozens of outstanding trees in Saratoga which are on display online at [www.HeritageTreesofSaratoga.Org](http://www.HeritageTreesofSaratoga.Org). The group offers periodic lectures on tree care and shares their knowledge on YouTube and in many blogs.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT

Preserving the surrounding forests and bucolic peacefulness of this one-time agricultural, now "bedroom" community, is very important to the residents and businesses of Saratoga. This is evident in the City of Saratoga Statement of Values.

### Municipal

**Energy Conservation:** LED lights and solar lights decorate Village trees and light Village streets and parks. Solar panels in the City Corporation Yard and the Saratoga Library provide energy. There are 12 electric car charging stations provided throughout the City.

*Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) is a program offered to Saratoga residents that enables them to fund upgrades such as adding insulation, double paned windows, solar panels, and artificial turf, by taking a loan out against their property, which is transferrable to new owners.*

**Water Conservation:** A Smart Watering System throughout the City waters only when needed, with over 50 controllers. This program was started in 2002. Drip irrigation and deep watering of tree wells and

other landscaped areas is provided. Mulch is used throughout the City. Drought tolerant and native California plants are used when possible.

*Starting in 2015, the City dedicated funds for the removal of turf in parks to reduce overall water use. Turf removal has been focused in areas where grass has a difficult time growing and in underutilized areas.*

*To further reduce water usage, street sweepers hired by the City of Saratoga began using recycled water in 2015. As a result of water use reductions, City water use in 2015 was reduced by 40% when compared to 2013 water use levels.*

**Clean Water:** *The West Valley Clean Water Program is a cooperative effort of the cities of Saratoga, Monte Sereno, Los Gatos and Campbell, to reduce pollution to our waters. The goals are to: reduce pollutants in storm water and discharges from storm drains into creeks; maximize the effectiveness of pollution prevention efforts and work toward repair of impaired waters; and help the four West Valley Communities meet State Water Resources Control Board and Federal Clean Water Act goals for clean and healthy local water bodies. It also offers school-age education to increase awareness and promote change of habits, and information about events and where to participate in activities. Storm drains are marked “No Dumping, Water Goes to the Bay.”*

**Recycling:** Curbside recycling of paper, plastic and cans, and garden “waste”, is provided on a weekly basis. Well marked recycling cans are placed along the Village streets and public places. A Clean-Up Day is offered in July when residents can put anything on the curb for pick up. *Additionally, the City accepts many forms of electronic waste in curbside containers and batteries can be disposed by placing them in a plastic bag and leaving them on top of recycling cans. The local sheriff’s office has a drop-off for expired or no longer needed medications.*

**Composting:** *In April 2016, the City started separating organic materials produced by City operations from other waste streams. This material is used to produce compost. Free mulch is given to the residents by the City on Arbor Day to be used throughout the city. Mulch is available for the asking at other times.*

Plastic bags are provided along Village streets and parks for Doggie waste, and leash laws are in effect.

Zoning ordinances protect our hillsides by limiting building to one house per acre. Houses need to be built below ridgelines to help preserve a more natural landscape. There are special zoning ordinances for new construction and remodeling.

Pest spraying, for example for mosquitoes, is provided by the City by specially trained employees. Under state law, one person in the department must have 20 hours of training and a license, but, in fact, all employees in this department have the training and license.

## **Business**

There is limited commercial development. Only one percent of the City’s total acreage is commercial; there is limited manufacturing within the City limits.

West Valley College, Prospect High School, and the Saratoga Library have solar panels over their parking lots or on their roofs.

*This year, West Valley College completed a restoration of Vasona Creek. The project included channel stabilization, enhancement of the existing wetland, removal of invasive plant species and native plant re-vegetation, a storm water management plan, and a trail along the creek. In 2016, Arbor Day was held at West Valley College near Vasona Creek to celebrate completion of the project and brings greater awareness to the need for protecting and restoring natural habitats in the City.*

## **Residential**

New Building Code 2014: Water Efficient Landscape Regulation was instituted to guide new/remodel construction. *These regulations were strengthened to further reduce water consumption in 2016.*

Xeriscaping, hardscaping, and voluntary water rationing is encouraged. Many residents are reducing or eliminating their lawns in favor of low-water use alternatives. *Many residents are installing solar panels.*

There are noise ordinances which limit activities such as blowers and construction to certain times of the day. Noise levels are also monitored in town. Construction sites are fenced and cleaned up regularly.

## **Community Involvement**

Earth Day, Arbor Day, and Creek Clean-up Day, among others, are celebrated with various activities which get the community, young and old, involved and informed. Adopt-a-Highway gives residents another way to contribute by keeping our roadways clean. Ongoing cleanup days are routinely sponsored by Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Saratoga's Youth commission, and churches.

The 3,688 acre Sanborn Park is in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, and was established in the late 1970s as a large land area park with low intensity use. Some of the many habitats it contains are redwood forests, California oak woodlands, chaparral, riparian and grassland areas. It is the first link in the Bay Area Ridge Trail, which circles the Bay Area with approximately 500 miles of trails, and also connects with the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail. These trails are enjoyed by many people each year, from Saratoga and beyond.

The redwood forests and the California oak woodlands are endemic areas, only found in the California Floristic Province. This is known as a biodiversity hotspot, and Saratoga is located in one of only 33 hotspots in the world. The endemic plants and animals found in a hotspot cannot survive anywhere else in the world. Saratoga's Sanborn Park and Quarry Park are part of a much larger effort to protect these special habitats. Many volunteers are required.

Saratoga CERT, Community Emergency Response Team, is an active, growing group of resident volunteers, (over 300), who are trained to help out in a disaster such as a severe earthquake or wildfire, both of which are a real threat in our area. Saratoga has a major fault line, The San Andreas Fault, running through our hills, and with the worst drought in 100 years, we are at risk of a major wildfire.

## **Educational Environmental Programs**

Sanborn County Park, and the Sanborn Science and Nature Center, also known as the Youth Science Institute, or YSI, are located in the hills of Saratoga. YSI, housed in an historic home built in 1915 and designated an historical landmark, teaches hands-on nature-based environmental and social science, primarily to over 10,000 children a year. It is a non-profit organization which could not operate without its many volunteers.

Walden West, also situated in Sanborn Park, is another organization that has been educating our youth for over 60 years. Most recently, they began an exciting program for K-8 students that combine science,

sustainability, and the outdoors in day-long science and environmental programs using the new Abby Sobrato Science and Sustainability Center at Walden West. Their goal is to prepare students for continuing environmental stewardship in their communities through programs such as Growing Gardens and Eco Action projects at school and home. They provide affordable, high quality education to all demographics in Santa Clara Valley. Walden West also depends on volunteers and donations.

To meet a growing demand for additional science programs, Walden West created Growing Gardens for Growing Minds to engage students in outdoor garden learning at their own schools.

A community garden at Quito Park and several gardens at local churches and schools give people an opportunity to grow their own food, and donate to Second Harvest Food Bank, or other organizations of their choice. The schools teach environmentally sound gardening practices, the value of preserving our land and the importance of growing things, and giving back to the community.

## HERITAGE

*Saratoga has a proud heritage with many streets, schools, and neighborhoods named after famous Saratoga pioneers or events. Saratoga is one of the oldest cities in the Santa Clara County. Its historic homes, sites, landmarks, trees, and orchards are considered an irreplaceable asset by the community.*

### Municipal

#### Leadership

The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), *established in 1982* and appointed by the City Council *implements the Heritage Preservation Ordinance*. The HPC's purpose is to build an inventory of heritage resources and to preserve their unique and historic characteristics. Saratoga currently has 109 properties on the inventory, 25 are designated landmarks, 6 are on the National Register of Historic Places, and 9 are Mills Act Properties. Saratoga also has 2 designated Historic Lanes. Saratoga has 39 trees on its Heritage Tree list. *The HPC will be providing tree owners with plaques.*



*The HPC is also working on new historic markers. The City Council has approved the first two: Blossom Festival and the Theatre in the Glade.*

*Saratoga was named a California Landmark in 1948 and as such the Saratoga Village Design Guidelines are tremendously important to its preservation. In the past year the Heritage Preservation Commission has been working with the City Council and Planning Commission to update these guidelines with a focus on balance between preservation and progress.*

The city owns and maintains several historic sites:

- City purchased and maintains the History Park, home to the Saratoga History Museum, the historic Mc Williams House, a Saratoga one-room school house adjacent to the historic Village Library, and the History Garden.
- Hakone Gardens established in 1917
- Quarry Park in partnership with the Open Space Preserve

*The San Jose Water district has given permission to place an historic plaque on its building located on Big Basin Way. It was built in 1925 and was known as the Lumbertown Station Building.*

### **Legal protection of heritage sites**

Federal and local municipal codes protect resources on the Heritage Inventory and Heritage Tree list.

### **Resource availability**

Mills Act can provide tax relief for historic preservation of landmark properties.

Heritage Preservation Commission provides advice and recommendations on restoration.

Saratoga Village Design Guidelines provide guidance on architecture, landscaping, signage, and pedestrian consideration. *The guidelines, with the help of the HPC, are going thru a major revision.*

*A complete list of heritage trees and properties with descriptions can be found on the city website.*

## **Business**

### **Conservation restoration and rehabilitation**

Restoration of the Barn and planned restoration of the Grover House and protection of the John Henry House by local businesses help preserve the architectural integrity of these important 19<sup>th</sup> century homes. Businesses recognize the economic value of the Village and work to protect it.

### **Participation in heritage and cultural activities**

Saratoga has a long tradition of celebrations dating from the 1920's. Saratoga Chamber of Commerce, the Saratoga Village Development Council (SVDC), and local business actively support **Memorial Day and 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations**, the **Blossom Festival**, **Heritage Days**, and the 15 cultural activities run each year.

## **Residential**

### **Conservation restoration and rehabilitation**

Our community and residents have taken an active role in preserving the identity of this town as evidenced by the 109 properties on the Heritage Inventory and almost 40 trees on the recently established Heritage Tree List. *Unique private gardens include the Peck Heritage Garden which has been featured in many magazines. The Heritage Tree Society, an all volunteer group, also maintains a pictorial list of Heritage Trees in our city. A link to that list can be found on the city website.*

### **Participation in heritage and cultural activities**

Saratoga residents turn out in record numbers for the Blossom Festival, Heritage Days, the Memorial Day celebration, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, Arbor Day and the 15 events run in our City every year and supply much of the people power to run these events. *Tree owners nominate their trees to be on the Heritage Tree List and homeowners for their property to be on the Designated Landmark List.*

## **Community Involvement**

Saratoga is well recognized as a city where government, civic organizations, businesses, residents, youth and schools, and volunteers come together in support of diverse heritage activities.

*Two weekly farmers markets held Saturday at West Valley College and Wednesday by the historic Memorial Arch in Blaney Plaza are well attended.*



### **Heritage Days- Early Fall**

Saratoga Village is the site for the fall Heritage Day Festivals where local residents don costumes and act out many of the famous characters that founded this town— mayors, lumberjacks, vintners, the founders of Hakone Gardens, Senator Phelan who donated Villa Montalvo —all parade the streets of Saratoga in full costume. Children are given a score card and prizes to meet all or many of the 50 famous people who walk the streets including Olivia de Havilland, Joan Fontaine, and their mother Lillian Fontaine, all of whom grew up in Saratoga.



### **Blossom Festival- Early Spring – see Best Idea**

The annual Blossom Festival is held on the grounds of the Warner\_Hutton house and the adjacent Heritage Orchard. Many orchards in the Silicon Valley have been uprooted for housing but Saratogans have stood firm to preserve this beautiful orchard. The all volunteer event is run by the Saratoga History Foundation. It is a re-creation of one that originated in 1900 and ran until World War II.

### **Memorial Day Celebration**

Organized by the Saratoga Foothill Club, attended by local scout troops, with music by the Saratoga High School Band, this annual event takes place on the grounds of Madronia Cemetery, established in 1854 and is the grave site of such notables as Mary Ann Brown, wife of John Brown. This event has been run by the Foothill Club since 1928.

### **History Foundation and History Museum Volunteers**

Operated by an all volunteer Board of Directors and all volunteer staffing, the Saratoga History Museum is open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The Museum partners with local schools and colleges to produce events and to help with many museum activities. *The museum also provides walking tours of Saratoga on a regular basis. Brochures are located at the museum, Chamber of Commerce, Library, and City Hall.*

The museum grounds include the Mc Williams house, an 1850 pioneer cottage. Docents teach pioneer living to over 1000 school children that go through the class every year.

The Saratoga Historical Garden is located on the grounds of the Book-Go-Round (the original Village Library) and the History Museum, The garden features native and/or drought tolerant plants identified with markers. A self-guided tour brochure is available. Many of the plants were developed specifically for Saratoga by the non-profit Saratoga Horticultural Research Foundation in 1952.

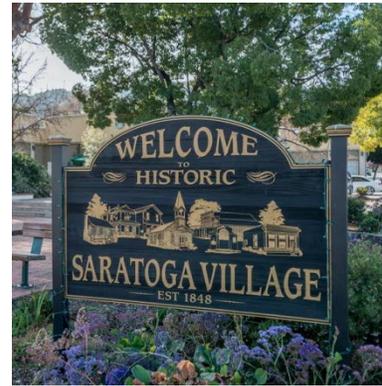
## **OVERALL IMPRESSION**

Until 1956 Saratoga was considered a part of San Jose. The residents, about 5,000 of them, decided to become a city because of their concern about being annexed by San Jose. The City was formed after a very close vote and committed itself to staving off the increasing commercialization and urban sprawl born of the growth of the burgeoning tech industry that was swallowing up most municipalities. Saratoga has fought hard to stay a charming respite from the crazy world around them in the Silicon Valley.

There is little industry in Saratoga. Today Saratoga retains a strong sense of place as was headlined in the Saratoga News, the weekly newspaper.

The historic Village has remained historic and small although over 300 condominiums have been built around its four-block Village core.

Wildwood Park, in the heart of the Village, remains the most popular park in the City. There is a bandstand in the park frequently used by the community band and 'Opera in the Park' along with an Easter egg hunt and many other activities. The City Council has allocated \$35,000 to sponsor the many Saratoga community events run by its organizations.



No building in the Village is over 2 stories, affording a beautiful view of its surrounding hills. Any commercial change is widely publicized and citizens are encouraged to voice their opinions about the project. Currently a large project has been proposed and approved for the center of the Village at Blue Rock Shoot and the historic Grover House next door. The Grover House is to be saved.

There are many opportunities to sit outside either to eat or to converse whether at the coffee shops or multiple benches and seating areas throughout the Village. Dog bowls and treats are placed everywhere, as well as a dog drinking fountain. In addition plastic bags are available for use by dog owners on poles in the Village and parks for use by the dog owners. Residents know store owners and store owners work closely with the residents to sweep and water their areas because the residents' role model this activity for them. The Golden Broom Award, presented by the Village Gardeners, is handed out to those who keep their businesses tidy on a regular basis.

The City staff is small, just 52 employees. Citizens for the most part know the staff and there is great respect shown amongst the staff and the citizenry. Staff shows great pride in their City. They work hard to keep it beautiful and respond immediately to the infrequent calls about graffiti, potholes etc. Medians are always tidy and well planted. Native plants are used for the most part although some areas were planted years ago with non-native species when there was no water shortage.

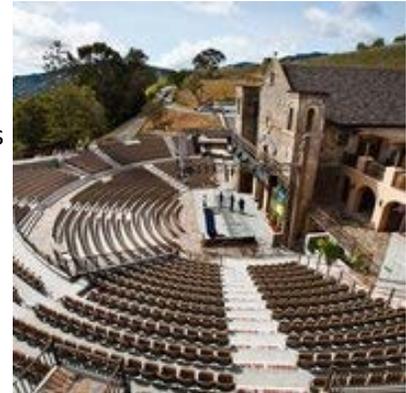
*As mentioned, the City Council named the red geranium the City flower. It was announced in the newspaper, on social media and everywhere. The contest, previously mentioned, spurred our local ACE Hardware to stock red geraniums and they have sold hundreds to our residents. Red geraniums have been planted throughout the City with colorful pots at the post office, library, City Hall and up and down Big Basin Way. Volunteers were responsible for this effort.*

There is a ministerial association comprised of the 11 churches, synagogues and Muslim Association that meets once a month. The Muslim Association rents Saratoga's Prospect Center for their gatherings during holy days and the City Council and neighbors are always invited to a dinner before the holy days begin.

Saratoga is beautifully tended by its staff and residents and proudly bears the title of one of the Safest Cities in California. A marble plaque was presented to each Council member by the Santa Clara County Sheriff's department in 2014 honoring that distinction.

The commitment of the citizens to their community is continually underscored by their willingness to approve parcel taxes which, according to California law, must garner a two-thirds majority referendum vote for passage and their support for the Saratoga Education Foundation provides funding for numerous educational enrichment opportunities for the children. The designation of Saratoga High School as the fourth highest rated high school in the state would not have been possible without broad-based community support, support achieved despite the fact that far less than half the households have children in the school system.

Saratoga is one of the leading cultural centers in Silicon Valley. Hakone Gardens is the largest authentic Japanese garden west of the Mississippi River and is included in the National Registry of historic sites. Villa Montalvo provides in-residence internships for aspiring artists of all types and is a frequent concert venue.



The Mountain Winery has a state-of-the-art 2500 seat amphitheater that provides a venue for more than fifty performances from top of the line acts, many of whom say it is among their favorite places to perform and return over and over.

## Community Involvement

Saratoga has a strong sense of place and an active and involved citizenry that works very hard to preserve and build on. We celebrate the contribution of all that have gone before to enable this city to become what it is. We feel a deep sense of responsibility to continue to fulfill their vision for our City.



*Village Gardeners & Public Works at Play*

The Village Gardeners take full responsibility for the plants in the Village supplying water and watering cans as needed on over 100 Village pots and 75 tree wells. *The Public Works department at the City designed yellow pails with the Village Gardener decal for volunteers to use as they garden in the Village.*

The Saratoga Village Development Council is run by volunteers and has a listserv with over 600 respondents to hear the news of the Village and a very current website, [www. SaratogaVillage.info](http://www.SaratogaVillage.info). Monday Missives is sent out by a volunteer to inform residents of events and store promotions going on that week.

KSAR15, Saratoga's local TV channel, is run by volunteers and one part-time employee. "Saratoga Highlights" featuring 130 events recorded by volunteers over the past decade and can be viewed on the KSAR15 website or YouTube.

The **Historical Museum** has monthly events; both speakers and heritage events. The museum is totally run by volunteers. The **Friends of the Library** run an all-volunteer used book store which generates

\$150,000 a year to enable the library to be open more hours per week. The **Echo Shop** in the Village is run by the women from the local Episcopal Church and gives to charities throughout the Valley.

**The Foothill Women's Club**, located in an historic Julia Morgan building, actively educates and informs its member, all volunteers.



Celebrations are held on **Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and the Blossom Festival** in early spring at the Heritage Orchard. Residents also run one event a month for children in the Village for all to enjoy. These include **Love Notes, St. Paddy's Party, Heritage Day,**



**Bollywood, Witchy Walkabout and Thanksgiving Tree Lighting.**

Residents decorate wreaths for display on Big Basin Way during the holiday season and create the most unusual *scarecrows for display in Fall.*

In summer, Opera in the Park, Community Band Concerts, and outdoor showing of movies in Quito Park are held for all to enjoy.

The **Classic Car** show put on by the Chamber of Commerce is attended by thousands. The website, **Saratogavillage.info** run by volunteers, lists the event schedules, and attracts hundreds of viewers.

The Heritage Tree Society of Saratoga maintains a website ([heritagetreesofsaratoga.org](http://heritagetreesofsaratoga.org)) with tree news and educates the public at talks given by leading arborists. Judges pick the loveliest trees in the City for the list. Arbor Day has sponsored tree posters done by the school children in the town and then displayed in the Village store windows. Arbor Day and Earth Day celebrations are conducted by the City of Saratoga accompanied by a tree planting with a plaque. Small oak trees ready for planting are donated by Saratoga residents and handed out during the Arbor Day celebration. In 2010 the City Council established a goal of having 2015 new trees planted by 2015. Through strong community support the goal was achieved in 2012.



Saratoga has 5 commissions with members chosen by the City Council. All five do a great deal of work for the City without compensation.

The Saratoga Education Foundation raises approximately a quarter million dollars annually to enable the schools to offer arts programs and other enrichment experiences for children.

*Motivated by a suggestion made in the AIB judges' in 2015, the Saratoga City Council honored its volunteers at the citywide State of the City Mayoral address and municipal gathering attended by hundred of Saratogans and broadcast by KSAR15 for city-wide viewing. Awards were given for Citizen of the Year and Business Person of the Year in addition to recognition to our Village Gardener's and all the volunteers and business leaders who contribute so heavily to the running of our city.*

## BEST IDEA- - BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Silicon Valley was once known as the Valley of Heart's Delight. Fruit orchards dominated the landscape with canning and Valley of the Hearts Delight agricultural equipment development. Prunes, apricots and cherries were grown in abundance. At its most productive, 1/3 of the world's prunes were produced in the Santa Clara Valley.

In 1900 Rev. Edward "Sunshine" Williams proposed a "thanksgiving jollification" in celebration of the bountiful fruit trees. Miles of fruit trees, brilliant poppies and mustard dotted the landscape and the delicate scent of blossoms prevailed. People came from as far as San Francisco to enjoy a day of events, tour the blossoming trees and sampling homemade foods in Saratoga. The festival grew each year and had a successful run until WWII.

After WWII, Saratoga changed from agricultural to suburban. Space technology, defense, and electronics industries brought people to the Valley. Orchards were lost to growing industries and homes. And, the Blossom Festival became a lost tradition.

The Blossom Festival was brought back in 2013 by the Saratoga Historical Foundation. The festival celebrates the spirit of the Valley of Heart's Delight. It is held in the Heritage Orchard when the trees are in blossom.

Activities include docent-led walks, prune sampling, gifts of paper blossoms made by the Girl Scouts, local history presentations, live music, antique cars and farm engines, crafts, and costumed Saratoga historic figures.

Attendance has grown each year and once again people come from beyond San Francisco to enjoy the blossoms of this historical tradition brought back.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Saratoga AIB Committee wish to express our appreciation to the **2015 America in Bloom judges, Jack Clausen and Evelyn Alemani**, for their continuous encouragement and for highlighting areas in which Saratoga, a city of which we are all so proud, could become yet better. We hope that you will see your fingerprints both in this report and in the improvements that this year's judges will witness when they visit. We are just now beginning to fully appreciate the importance of the decision we undertook a little over a year ago to enter this contest. The recognition granted to our city by the AIB organization both validates and inspires and has become a catalyst for yet broader community involvement. We hope that in turn you will be validated and inspired to carry on the work that has helped bring us to this point.



***We can't thank you enough.***

## CONTACTS

### **AIB Committee**

Kate Bear, City Arborist

Sean Halasz\*, Floral Displays

Manny Cappello, Mayor

Paula Cappello\*, Heritage, AIB Report Editor, HPC

John Cherbone, Dept of Public Works

Loren Cook, Treasurer

Jill Hunter, Chair\*, Overall Impression

Tina Liddie\*, Environmental Effort

James Lindsay, City Manager

Marilyn Marchetti\*, Heritage Preservation Committee (HPC)

Kevin Meek, Dept of Public Works

Howard Miller, City Council

Laurel Perusa, Village Gardener Lead

Charlotte Foster Roman\*, Urban Forestry, Landscaped Areas

Pallavi Sharma\*, Landscaped Areas

Annette Stransky\*, History Foundation Chair, HPC

Kerstin Ericsson-Splawn, Business Owner and Village Gardener  
Village Gardeners

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# TOUR AND ITINERARY

<b>Monday May 2</b>	
<b>Monday Afternoon</b> judges greeted at airport	Jill Hunter
<b>Monday Evening</b> Welcome dinner for AIB Judges Karin Rindal and Pam Turrell 5:30 tour of the History Park 6:00 pm reception and dinner at the History Museum	History Foundation Board Members join judges and AIB Committee for dinner
<b>Tuesday May 3rd</b>	
<b>Tuesday Morning Inn at Saratoga 9am</b>	Jill Hunter, Howard Miller (City Council)
Wildwood Park	
Quarry Park	
Historic tree viewing on Farwell Avenue	
Discuss community efforts and WVC collaboration of median	
Congress Springs Ball Fields	
Azule and Kevin Moran Parks	
Saratoga Prospect Center, Joe's Trail	
Saratoga High School	
City tour 11:30	
<b>Noon Lunch with City Staff at Warner Hutton House</b>	James Lindsay, John Cherbone, Kevin Meek, Kate Bear, Jill Hunter
<b>Tuesday Afternoon</b>	Jill Hunter, Tina Liddie, Charlotte Roman, and Pallavi Sharma
West Valley College Tour 1:15	Scott Ludwig
Heritage Orchard, Saratoga Library, Community Garden	
Pierce Road to Garrod Farms	Doris and Bill Cooper
Mountain Winery	
Montalvo Arts Center, Tea and Tour	
<b>Return to hotel at 5 pm</b>	
<b>6:30 pm dinner at the home of Sean Halasz</b>	City Council, AIB Committee
<b>Wednesday May 4<sup>th</sup></b>	
<b>Wednesday Morning, Inn at Saratoga 9am</b>	Jill Hunter, Paula Cappello, Charlotte Roman
Madronia Cemetery	General Manager, Steve Albright
Saratoga School District offices	Nancy Johnson (Superintendent)
Federated Church	Jerry Bruce
Foothill Club	Sue Barrera, Alexandra Nugent, Sara Lofgren
<b>Noon Lunch at Hakone Gardens</b>	<b>Media lunch</b>
Village walk through including Farmer's Market and Blaney Plaza	Meet merchants
<b>6:00 pm Community Dinner at Bella Saratoga</b>	Residents and guests join judges
<b>Thursday morning May 5th</b>	Jill Hunter and judges recap visit