



Palo Alto, CA



The land for Palo Alto, California, was purchased by Leland Stanford, former governor of California and president of the Central Pacific Railroad, as an alcohol-free town for the students and faculty of his newly established Stanford University in the late 1880s. He named his town for a 1,000-year-old coastal redwood tree, El Palo Alto, growing in an area where early Spanish explorers settled.

Among Stanford University's attractions, the 285-foot Hoover Tower exhibits documents and memorabilia from President Herbert Hoover's life and contains a carillon of 48 bells. The nonsectarian Romanesque-style Stanford Memorial Church features mosaic Bible scenes, New Testament-themed stained glass windows, 3 organs, and an impressive dome. Established to display the Stanford family's art and cultural collections, the Cantor Arts Center now has 24 art galleries; the Rodin Sculpture Garden and the New Guinea Sculpture Garden are adjacent. The Stanford Linear Accelerator Center is another campus highlight.

The Museum of American Heritage, Palo Alto Art Center, and Junior Museum & Zoo (children's museum) are also located in the city. The Computer History Museum and the Hiller Aviation Museum are located in nearby towns.

Palo Alto is home to the Palo Alto Players, which produces comedies, dramas, classics and musicals; Palo Alto Children's Theatre; Palo Alto Philharmonic; Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra; Palo Alto Guitar Series; and New Century Chamber Orchestra. Performing arts venues include Lucie Stern Community Center, Cubberley Community Center Theater, All Saints Episcopal Church, and First United Methodist Church.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Downtown Palo Alto dates from 1890s and still contains a combination of residential, commercial, and retail structures developed in its early days. Houses are small and situated on small lots. The downtown area has the highest concentration of condominium units in the city.

Also developed in the 1890s, the Professorville neighborhood was named for the concentration of professors residing in this area adjoining the campus. Now a historic district, housing styles include Craftsman, Dutch Colonial, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival; lots vary widely in configuration and size. The garage where Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard started their Hewlett-Packard Company is a notable neighborhood property. Also close to the university, College Terrace has a mix of house and lot sizes, including single family homes, small cottages, duplexes, and triplexes. English Cottage, Queen Anne home, California Mission bungalow, and mid-Century flat are among the architectural styles.

Barron Park features a lush, pastoral setting with rustic charm reminiscent of the area's fruit orchard past; the streets have no sidewalks and few streetlights. Eclectic and modest architectural styles are common as are 1920s ranch-style bungalows, with Craftsman styles popular in new construction. Two donkeys reside in the neighborhood's Bol Park.

Midtown and Ventura were developed after World War II for returning veterans. Although Midtown's development did not follow a typical suburban street grid, it did adopt standardized lot sizes. Homes in Ventura are relatively smaller, single-story California bungalows, with a few newer two-story homes. However, starting in the 1990s, many residents began remodeling or replacing them. These communities now feature a mix of mid-sized bungalows, California ranch and Eichler homes, and new, larger homes.

Lots in Old Palo Alto and Crescent Park are generally larger than in other city neighborhoods. Old Palo Alto features tree-canopied streets, lush lawns, luxury estates, and some smaller homes. The first Old Palo Alto home, now known as the Elizabeth Gamble house, was built by the son of Proctor & Gamble Company's co-founder, whose daughter, Elizabeth, gifted the estate to the city in 1970. Unlike most Palo Alto neighborhoods, Crescent Park has many two-story houses. Architectural styles include Mediterranean, Victorian, Early Californian, and Monterey Colonial.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Palo Alto has 34 city-owned parks with an assortment of amenities that include playgrounds; playing, softball, and soccer fields; walking and running paths; tennis, handball, and basketball courts; skate bowls; community gardens; dog exercise areas; lawn bowling green; swimming pools; community centers; and Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course.

The Elizabeth Gamble Garden Center features a 1902 Edwardian house and formal, working, and demonstration gardens. The estate also includes a carriage house, teahouse, tool house, greenhouse, and a gazebo. Community garden sites are located behind the main library and at the Edith Johnson Garden and Eleanor Pardee Garden.

The Baylands protects some of the last remaining West coast salt-marsh and mud-flat habitats and is considered to be one of the best bird watching areas on the coast. Baylands offers walking, running, and biking trails; windsurfing; nonmotorized boating; and baseball and softball fields.

Wildlife abounds on the Pearson-Arastradero Preserve, which contains a mixture of rolling savannah grassland and broadleaf evergreen forest, and at Foothills Park, which has rugged chaparral, woodlands, fields, streams, and a lake. Hiking and biking trails are available as is fishing in the lakes. Boating and camping are permitted at Foothills Park, but not at Pearson-Arastradero Preserve, which also has equestrian trails.

California's Great America is a theme park located near Palo Alto.

EDUCATION

The Palo Alto Unified School District educates approximately 12,000 students in 12 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 2 high schools. Most students live in Palo Alto; others reside in areas of Los Altos Hills, Portola Valley, and on the Stanford University campus.

Higher education is available at Stanford University, which is a private, nonprofit research university that offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in many fields. Stanford's School of Medicine is the oldest medical school in the West. Palo Alto University, a private, nonprofit educational institution, offers undergraduate and graduate degrees with an emphasis in the behavioral and social sciences.

Foothill-De Anza Community College District serves Palo Alto residents with campuses in Los Altos Hills and Cupertino.

HEALTH CARE

Palo Alto is served by Stanford Hospital & Clinics with 613 licensed beds, and the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford with 311 beds devoted entirely to pediatrics and obstetrics. With nearly 900 beds, the VA Palo Alto Health Care System operates inpatient facilities in Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Livermore.

CITY STATS

2012

City Population	66,363
Metropolitan Statistical Area Population	4,455,560
Per Capita Personal Income, San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA, MSA	\$66,591