

Melissa Thurman

From: Marie Young <marieyoung120@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2023 4:32 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Public Comment
Subject: re Item #4, 9/26/23 City Council Agenda

Dear Mayor Meadows and Members of the Los Altos City Council,

As a longtime resident and homeowner (since 1976) of Los Altos, I am increasingly concerned with misinformation circulating about the possible redevelopment of Rancho Shopping Center. Although I don't live in that neighborhood, I shop at businesses there regularly.

Apparently many people don't understand the powers and limitations the City Council has, nor, apparently is the role of the property owner well understood.

In this case, the Council is simply following the law, having committed to rezoning parts of the City through the Housing Element. If they were not to do so, we could face harsh penalties from the State. I commend you for herculean efforts to keep R-1 (single family housing in place).

The city does not build housing. The owner of Rancho is in the driver's seat in that regard and could, if he so desired, raze all of Rancho and replace it with housing now, regardless of Council decisions about zoning.

Some 34.2% of responses to The Town Crier's admittedly unscientific poll last week favor including both retail and housing at Rancho, which seems like a smart way to go especially given the age and condition of the current buildings.

Marie Young
Los Altos



September 24, 2023

Re: September 26, 2023, Meeting, Agenda Item #4
(Zone Text Amendments)

Dear Mayor Meadows and Members of the City Council:

The League of Women Voters (LWV) supports policies that encourage the development of housing, particularly affordable housing.

The LWV supports the staff recommendations and the proposed Zone Text Amendments as recommended by the Planning Commission on September 7, 2023.

These amendments should encourage housing development that will allow Los Altos to meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals. While the current zoning allows for residential units in mixed-use development, the proposed Commercial Neighborhood (CN) would allow all residential development. Height limits in mixed-use zones were noted as a serious constraint to redevelopment, as were the floor-area-ratios (FARs) at Rancho Shopping Center and Woodland Plaza. Allowing residential mixed use in various districts and multi-family uses in appropriate areas of mixed-use districts as a permitted use rather than a conditional use will provide greater certainty to developers and reduce the permitting time.

Please send any questions about this email to Sue Russell, Co-Chair of the Housing Committee, at housing@lwvlamv.org.

Sincerely,

Katie Zoglin
President
LWV of Los Altos-Mountain View Area

C: Gabe Engeland, City Manager
Melissa Thurman, City Clerk
Nick Zornes, Development Services Director
PublicComment@losaltosca.gov

Melissa Thurman

From: Penny Lave <pennylave@me.com>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 9:43 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Zoning Ordinance

I doubt any Los Altos resident is happy with the loss of local control that the State of California has appropriated in order to force cities to allow more housing to be built. The plain truth is we operate under the governance of the Federal System, the State, the County and lastly the City. The City has experienced in the past the futility of defying State housing laws. It has meant large fines and damages.

But, in addition to the fiscal penalties, it is important to recognize and follow the law. Council members can not be expected to defy the state when they disagree with it. Nor should they. City government has to have a legal foundation or it will not be respected on any level.

While the Council may, or may not, agree with State mandates, it must follow them.

Penny Lave

Sent from my iPad

Melissa Thurman

From: Jeanine Valadez <j9valadez@earthlink.net>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 2:00 PM
To: Administration; Public Comment; City Council; Gabriel Engeland
Subject: Public Comment - Not on the Agenda: Opposition to 5g node on San Juan Ct

City Manager Gabe Engeland, Honorable Mayor Sally Meadows, and Esteemed Members of the City Council,

I am hereby submitting this public comment to outline the reasons for my opposition to the installation of a 5g small cellular node on my cul de sac, San Juan Court.

First, I want to mention that I appreciate past efforts by Staff and the City Council to draft standards by which such installations might occur. I supported these criteria and also supported the issuance of the Urgency Ordinance. I am also aware that in the time since, decisions were made determining that installations shall proceed. I itemize my concerns and objections below.

1. Deceptive Information

: Once again, we learned of this change by opening what looked like junk mail this past weekend. Notices of this kind should be labeled *on the envelope exterior* clearly with “Urgent: Need your input on <topic or change> by <deadline>!” Moreover, there was no real information in the letter to explain why our street was chosen, or whether other small cell nodes will be installed nearby now or in the near future. There should have been included in this letter a local map showing proposed node placement, say 1000ft around this proposed node location. Additionally, some of the pictures, specifically the large one on the back of the actual letter, show only the tall extension at the top of the current pole; this picture does not show the equipment hung on the body of the pole.

2. Fear and Health Concerns

: Despite federal prohibitions against using health concerns when installing 5g nodes; science should still rule the day. There remains a large body of data that supports more restraint when it come to exposing our brains, particularly young and very old brains, to electromagnetic waves, especially high-frequency ones. Egan is adjacent to our cul de sac. There is also the hum and whirring of fans; never good when it goes on 24-7.

3. Property Value, Visual and Auditory Blight

: Impact on property value will be negative, particularly if a resident on this cul de sac foresees selling their house in the next 10 years, which is likely how long it will take to really miniaturize 5g nodes and deploy a fully functional network. Whether allowed as a valid objection or not, the fears of potential buyers about health risks will lower buying interest in my home. The height of the pole extension is far taller than the picture ATT provided years ago. Additionally, this equipment is ugly and hangs too low on the pole (probably required else the pole would be top-heavy). The equipment is obtrusive and interferes with one’s regular line-of-site on our street. Our street wires are bad enough. Having this bulky equipment so visible is sure to sway buyers away. This is not a taller housing development with a

beautiful façade seen through tall trees across San Antonio (should LASD build teacher housing at Egan); this is right in our faces. If you look at the pictures in the letter, that big box and the other ancillary components just above my neighbors' mailboxes are in scale. They will be bigger and taller than their mailbox columns! They will be what my neighbors, Pat, Bonnie, Marie, and Al immediately see when they look out their windows and walk out their doors. The fans will be audible 24-7. The rest of us will all see and hear that bulky equipment every day. Clearly ATT lied, and what this really betrays is that 5g remains "not ready for prime time." It's still big, clunky and hot.

4. San Juan Court is too small

: Right in front of one's home is NOT the place for a 5g node - atop one's home is NOT the place - one's backyard is NOT the place. Our street is too small for this level of intrusion. There is no lack of AT&T coverage on our narrow cul de sac. We have no lights, no curbs, no sidewalks, and parking on the street prevents easy two-way traffic - as a result, maintenance trucks are a major negative impact for us. San Juan Ct is neither a main thoroughfare nor a collector street. Why, then, is our street's pole a target for a small cell node?

5. We Don't Need It

: The reason ATT and other telecom companies are so hyped up about 5g is because it will enable them to charge customers lots of money for advanced services like gaming, high-data-content transmissions, and more data processing-oriented services like surveillance, customer tracking, self-driving cars, etc. It will also allow ATT and other providers to charge people more money for different levels of access to the internet (keep in mind the internet (the web) was designed to be free and available to ALL; 5g likely kills that principle). There may be other residents or neighborhoods that want these nodes on their streets; the City should conduct surveys to ID these neighborhoods and put these small nodes there. But the most important reality here is that the 5g that ATT is currently deploying is not really 5g. It's a rebranded 4g. ATT continues to rush to install nodes in order to lay claim to the pole as theirs for future technology.

6. Risk Mitigation Fallacies

: ATT is also using bogus justifications like improving Public Safety (Police and Fire) communications during fires and natural disasters. That's poppycock. 5g waves are tiny and are easily disrupted by obstructions like trees, buildings, smoke, clouds, etc. Besides, our telephone poles are flammable. Say goodbye to those poles during a fire. In my house, we are totally satisfied with our cellular and satellite services. Our wifi routers and repeaters can sense almost all our neighbors' wifi networks (of course we have passwords!), so there is no service gap or hole we can see. We'd highly prefer fiber to the curb for more bandwidth, NOT 5g, which is unreliable. We also hope that someday, our street will agree to underground our ugly and dangerous sky wires. Undergrounding is the best way to maximize public safety during a natural disaster.

7. Environmental Waste

: For many people, they will need to buy a new phone to really get the services offered by true 5g. Studies have shown that transitioning to 5g-ready handheld devices will create an enormous world-wide amount of environmental waste.

8. Where ATT sits, other companies will follow

: Another reason this tech is not ready for prime time in neighborhoods is because the equipment is still all proprietary. So, when Verizon comes along, they'll need just as much pole real estate to attach their equipment. Then when T-Mobile comes along, same thing. We're a small street and this much intrusion is beyond reasonable. Please place this node elsewhere where it is wanted.

Respectfully,

Jeanine Valadez

15 San Juan Court (homeowner since 1989)

Disclosure: I am a PARC commissioner but am speaking as a member of the public.



September 25, 2023

Dear Mayor Meadows and Councilmembers,

We fully support the text amendments submitted by Staff to bring the city's zoning ordinance into compliance with our adopted Housing Element. These changes to zoning will meaningfully encourage development in our mixed-use districts and will accommodate the potential for more housing in our CN and R3 districts. We also believe that removal of Conditional Use Permits in certain instances, as outlined by Staff, are important to remove barriers to development.

The Housing Element process has been a long journey towards approval, and we applaud the Council and Staff for working diligently to ensure that our City is in compliance. More importantly, the changes that we have already made and will make during this 6th Cycle will create the conditions so that more housing can be created. More homes—whether they are apartments, condominiums, single-family homes, or townhomes—create space for more neighbors so that we can continue to celebrate a vibrant community with people from all backgrounds and all incomes.

Respectfully,
Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance

Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance
Committed to educating and inspiring the Los Altos community to build housing that is affordable for those who live and work in Los Altos
<https://losaltosaffordablehousing.org/>

Melissa Thurman

From: Nancy Martin <nancy.martin@mac.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2023 12:00 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Gabriel Engeland
Subject: Tonight's meeting - An urgent request to postpone approving removing the FAR and height restrictions for 90+ days

Dear City Council and City manager,

Now that Housing Element Plan has been approved and we are safe from the Builder's Remedy and potential fines (good job btw!) myself and others would like to ask that you NOT make any decisions on modifying the FAR ratio and building height restrictions at this time.

The residents are very upset over removing the existing FAR ratio, which would greatly contribute to unthinkable mass and bulk in the designated housing sites.

Since the city is not under a deadline to make these decisions at this time, the residents would like to request at least 90 days to evaluate the need for removing all these very important restrictions.

As you have probably noticed, the residents have just begun to understand what's happening with the state mandated housing program. The outreach didn't make the definition and scope of how drastic the changes would be.

At the last meeting, most residents were shocked and angry to learn that Rancho shopping center and five others are slated to be torn down and replaced with huge five story structures.

I'm speaking for a large group of people who would like the time to evaluate OTHER other potential sites for the 200+ units Rancho would serve, as well as Altos Oaks and our downtown.

I hope you will grant this request as representatives of the residents who elected you and now look to you for help on this massive intrusion by the state. It will help calm the anger and begin a positive step with residents working together.

Thank you,
Nancy Martin

Melissa Thurman

From: John Meaney <john.meaney@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2023 1:49 PM
To: Public Comment; City Council
Subject: Fwd: Public comment re: Draft Housing Element plan/ Concerns about Rancho site

Hi,

I am writing again with concerns about the housing element plan submittal as it impacts the re-development of the Rancho shopping center. We live in the residential area surrounding Rancho and foresee any development of this area that contributes to increased traffic and reduced shopping options would negatively affect our lifestyle and property values. Rancho is unique when compared to Woodland Plaza (Lucky) and Foothill Plaza (Trader Joes) in the proximity of single-family residential neighborhoods surrounding three sides of the property.

I understand the need to make hard choices in order to meet the state mandate for housing. Specifically, I would ask that mixed-use development, including commercial, be a requirement if housing is to be incorporated in the zoning for Rancho and Woodland Plaza, i.e. it could not be re-developed for housing only without retaining a commercial component. I would also ask that mixed-use (commercial and residential) be included at Foothill Plaza. I did not see Foothill Plaza including in the Housing Element plan and assume this is currently commercially zoned according to the Los Altos Zoning Map.

Thank you for considering my email as part of the public comments to city council.

John

John Meaney
650-823-3051

Begin forwarded message:

From: John Meaney <john.meaney@yahoo.com>
Subject: Public comment re: Draft Housing Element plan
Date: January 9, 2023 at 5:06:56 PM PST
To: PublicComment@losaltosca.gov

I would like to strongly recommend against rezoning the Rancho Shopping Center for housing to meet the draft Housing Element plan. There would be significant negative impacts to our community of this rezoning effort and other more attractive options exist.

I am a 28-year resident of Los Altos and have raised two children in the neighborhoods here. We love the community feel of our Loyola Corners / central Los Altos neighborhood and Rancho Shopping Center is the primary social gathering center here where people walk their dogs, meet at Starbucks for coffee, children stop for ice cream and snacks on their way home from Loyola school, and everyone stops at Andronicos on the way home for grocery shopping. Rancho is a place where we run into our neighbors and friends, and a place of community connection. Increasing housing density at that busy intersection would be a game-changer for our neighborhood in a negative sense and would destroy the village feel of Rancho.

Already, the intersection at the main entrance to Rancho Shopping Center is busy and sometimes dangerous with 2 lanes from Magdalena collapsing to a single lane at Springer at the traffic light where all the kids are trying to cross on their way to and from Loyola school. Anyone who lives in this neighborhood has experienced near-collisions many times as people try to beat the light from Fremont Ave to get onto Foothill Expressway at the same time shoppers are exiting from Rancho shopping center. I can hardly imagine how this all changes for the better when you increase density and multi-use of this shopping center.

I'm sure there is no shortage of developers that would love to re-develop the Rancho site, but what is in the best interest of our local residents that live and go to school here? What about alternative sites? How about the shopping center where Lucky market is located at Grant Rd and the intersection of Arboretum? Lucky market is on a underutilized site that gets much less traffic and is adjacent to other retail/ commercial zoning on both sides that could also be put to better and higher use. In fact, the Goodwill donation truck that sits in the corner of the parking lot is a sign that this site could use some re-imagining as a more central South Los Altos meeting place. It is on a public bus line and nearby both 280 and Hwy 85, is not nearby a school, has very little foot traffic, and has fewer direct residential neighbors. It's walking distance to many services at the Foothill Plaza and could easily absorb a higher density housing element without negatively impacting neighbors and traffic patterns.

Loyola Corners has already been negatively impacted by expansions of the post office and water company that have turned it into one large parking lot for mail delivery and repair trucks. A long-running multi-use development project that seems to have been abandoned for more than 5 years have turned it into an eye sore. My neighbors and I feel that the City of Los Altos has done a poor job in planning and development of this important part of our neighborhood and it is no longer representative of the characteristic charm and attractiveness of Los Altos.

Rancho is the only pedestrian accessible shopping and gathering spot in central Los Altos and it retains the village character that we all appreciate about Los Altos. We strongly stand against rezoning Rancho.

Respectfully,

John Meaney
650-823-3051