

Melissa Thurman

From: Pat Marriot <patmarriott@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Sunday, September 10, 2023 1:16 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT ITEM #9 SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

Council Members:

Item 9. Authorize the City Manager to sign a contract with the Los Altos Chamber of Commerce in the amount of \$67,500 annually for five years.

A large portion of that money would go toward printing and distributing the Los Altos Magazine, which represents our city and its residents. Page 36 describes the Chamber's upcoming second trade mission to Dubai.

The city's new travel policy prohibits conference travel to states with discriminatory laws pursuant to State Assembly Bill 1887.

Given your valid and admirable concerns about discrimination, how do you justify supporting the Chamber in its relationship with Dubai, an absolute monarchy that is part of the dictatorship of the United Arab Emirates?

"Women over the age of 18 must still get approval from their guardian to marry or travel abroad. In fact, a husband can [legally withhold](#) his wife's passport to stop her from traveling."

<https://www.expatica.com/ae/living/gov-law-admin/womens-rights-in-the-united-arab-emirates-71118/>

"Homosexuality is illegal. According to the latest update of the global equality index, Equaldex, the UAE is [ranked at 5 out of 100 points](#), with zero points being the worst. 'The UAE continues to be one of the most dangerous places for LGBTQ people and tourists,' said Dan Leveille, head of Equaldex."

<https://www.dw.com/en/uae-is-becoming-increasingly-hostile-to-the-lgbtq-community/a-63257963>

I know the Chamber does a lot of good for the city, but if you genuinely value human rights, you should not be supporting its mission to Dubai directly or indirectly through this contract.

Pat Marriott

September 12, 2023

Mr. Nick Zornes
Development Services Director
Los Altos City Hall
1 N. San Antonio Road
Los Altos, California 94022

cc: Los Altos City Council Members

Sent via email: nzornes@losaltosca.gov, council@losaltosca.gov

Dear Mr. Zornes,

Over the past week there has been a great deal of discussion among neighbors and on NextDoor regarding the Los Altos Housing Element. What has become increasingly clear is that there is a good deal of confusion as to what the impact will be to the surrounding neighborhoods based on the rezoning and reclassification of existing commercial neighborhood parcels.

This letter is to request that you, or the appropriate representative from the Planning Commission or City Council, provide answers to the following questions and post them on the Housing Element website.

Specifically:

- What initiatives are being undertaken by the City Council and Planning Commission to identify, attract, and incentivize developers or parcel owners to build housing projects that will satisfy RHNA allocation while preserving the character and quality of life of the surrounding neighborhoods?
- What initiatives are being undertaken by the City Council and Planning Commission to secure Federal and private or corporate funding for low-income housing projects?
- What initiatives have been undertaken, or are being undertaken, to determine parcel owner or developer interest in either building or *not* building on any of the sites listed on the Housing Element (HE) maps?
- Are there any projects currently “in the pipeline” that will be counted towards the RHNA allotment?
- It appears that the city needs to make progress on at least 1/2 of the RHNA allocation for all income levels within the first 4 years of the cycle, which goes from 2023 to 2031. What constitutes “making progress” and what happens if the state determines the city has not made sufficient progress?
- If a site is marked for low-income on the HE maps, can a developer elect to build market rate or luxury units on the site instead? And, if so, how does the city plan to meet the RHNA allocation if the economics for building affordable housing are not compelling to developers?
- Would the development plans for any of the sites on the HE maps be subject to public review, input, or oversight?
- Must the city approve any housing development project at any of the sites on the HE maps so long as the project complies with objective design guidelines, without regard to impact on the surrounding neighborhood?
- Was the public invited to give input on the objective design guidelines? Where are these guidelines posted?

- Does the developer need to conduct impact studies to show the impact of a housing development on the surrounding neighborhood? If yes, what is included in these impact studies, who conducts them, and who reviews the findings? Are all proposed developments subject to a CEQA review?
- Who would need to cover any costs incurred to improve infrastructure, traffic patterns, services, or schools impacted by the housing development—the developer or the city residents?
- Does the developer need to provide parking if a low-income site is within 1/2 mile of public transit? What are the parking requirements if the development is more than 1/2 mile from public transit?
- Is there text in the HE plan that *mandates* reclassified commercial zones (Rancho Shopping, Woodland, Homestead) be developed to include a mix of retail and housing? If this text is not in the plan, would it be possible to add an amendment that stipulates mixed-use on these sites?
- Is it possible that the reclassified commercial zones in the HE plan could become strictly all-housing developments, leaving south and central Los Altos without any grocery stores?
- In the HE plan, the Rancho Shopping site is targeted for 82 units. However, would it be possible for a developer to build a housing complex with 237 units, the maximum cited in the HE plan?
- Would the density bonus mean that the current Rancho Shopping center could be replaced by a 5-story housing complex? Is there a maximum height on a development if the developer is granted a height waiver due to density bonus, builder's remedy, or other program?
- Where can we find an archive of the posters, billboards, and mailers sent to all Los Altos households informing residents of the Housing Element plan development? Is there a calendar that shows when (and where) these communications were either displayed or mailed?
- The HE plan lists the outreach activity that included two focus groups, 25 small group meetings with a total of 120 participants, pop-up booths, and two community workshops. Were there any workshops, mail-in surveys, door-to-door canvassing, mall-intercepts, or focus groups conducted with residents who lived in the vicinity of, or worked in the retail shops at, the proposed development sites?
- What measurement did the city use to determine that the city's outreach efforts were adequate to ensure the majority of the town's population were aware of, and understood the implications of, the sites proposed in the HE plan?

In addition to providing answers to the questions above, I'm requesting that you develop and post a glossary for terms and abbreviations used in the HE plan and housing discussions. This glossary should include, but not be limited to: HCD, HE, HEU, RHNA, CEQA, FAR, OA, CT, CN, CRS, BMR, MND, CDBG, LBNC, CSMP, TCAC, VMT, CUP, R1, R3, ADU with links to more information.

I am also requesting that you develop and post a synopsis of the various bills and programs that could impact housing development, including, but not limited to: SB 9, SB 10, SB 423, AB 185, AB 2097, Builder's Remedy, State Density Bonus Ordinance, Affordable Housing Ordinance.

Thank you,

Gaynelle Grover
 676 Oakwood Court
 Los Altos, California 94024
 650.954.5550

Melissa Thurman

From: scott_leonard66@yahoo.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 12:36 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Rezoning/Redevelopment of Rancho Shopping Center

Dear Los Altos City Council,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the pending proposal to rezone Rancho Shopping Center (RSC) for residential development. Such development would destroy dozens of thriving businesses and eliminate an even greater number of jobs. It would eliminate most of the current retail in South Los Altos, along with the walkability that makes this neighborhood special. The increased traffic it would bring would further damage quality of life in the neighborhood.

I understand the Housing Element Plan was two years in the making and was recently approved by the State. Unfortunately, whatever outreach efforts were undertaken during this process do not appear to have been particularly effective. Of the several dozen neighbors I have communicated with on this issue, none were aware this was on the horizon until about a week ago. Certainly none foresaw a possible outcome where South Los Altos could lose basically all of its retail in favor of massive, out of scale residential development.

The logical places to build high density housing in Los Altos are along the El Camino corridor (where such housing already exists and which is well served by transit) or in downtown Los Altos. From comments at last week's Planning Commission meeting, it appears the City's focus on redeveloping commercial zones such as Rancho was the result of a relatively small number of comments at the outset requesting protection of R1 zones at all cost. However, forced to choose between bad options, I believe many in our community would prefer to see alternatives such as taller residential buildings on El Camino Real or possibly some R1 lot splitting rather than redevelopment of Rancho and the rest of Los Altos' commercial zones. I urge the City to consider seeking to amend the Housing Element Plan after receipt of a wider range of inputs from Los Altos residents. If this cannot be done per the State's process, please provide an explanation why it cannot.

During last week's Planning Commission meeting, City staff indicated that it would be possible under the currently approved Housing Element Plan for City Council to designate Rancho for mixed-use housing only (rather than residential only). While not ideal, this approach would at least preserve some of the walkability we so cherish about our neighborhood and the possibility Rancho could continue to serve as our own mini-downtown and community gathering space. I urge the City to adopt such a measure immediately as an important mitigation measure in case Rancho does proceed down the path to redevelopment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,