



PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

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To send correspondence to the City Council, on matters listed on the agenda please email PublicComment@losaltosca.gov

From: [Jim Wing](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PublicComment-Agueda07-07-12-2022
Date: Saturday, July 2, 2022 7:07:46 PM

Los Altos Mayor Enander and Distinguished Council Members,

Council 07/12/2022 Meeting Agenda Item 07 Sixth Cycle Housing Element 2022-2031 Draft

Remove or revise Program 5.8 [Page 37] to allow Los Altos staff to work with any consultant who can do best job / best cost. Alta Design should not be the only consultant Los Altos is allowed to work with.

Please request staff to revise underreported Draft Housing Element Vacant Residential Parcels Maps / Summary to include the many acres of land that have not or could be subdivided. Algorithm and limited site visits caused consultant to underreport vacant lots [at least 9.54 acres] since they used only parcel numbers with improvements and Santa Clara County only assigns parcel numbers after subdivision. Following are examples of underreporting that should be added to Figures B-1, B-2, B-3 starting on page 134.

- Draft Housing Element Vacant Residential Parcels Map Figure B-3 [page 136] does not include vacant lot [3.5 acres] at end of Dover Court and Phase 2 of Manresa PUD lots [1.5 acre]. These lots were granted for possible future development when Jesuit Retreat and Event Center [50 acres] was annexed to Los Altos in 1986. Santa Clara County Assessor Map 175-30 does not show subdivision noted in annexation documents because property owner has not applied for subdivision.
- 479 Los Altos Ave [2.3 acres]
- 531 Rosita Ave [1.4 acres]
- El Monte / Fremont [Los Altos owned Lot, approximately 0.19 acre]
- Woodstock [Two Los Altos owned Lots; one 0.34 acre other 0.31acre]

In addition to vacant lots, Los Altos Gardens [6.338 acres, Parcel Map 167-16-51] is an existing low density / low income housing complex that could be increased to high density / low income housing. Almost 20 years ago, Planning Commission discussed increasing density by making units two story to save the trees.

In my opinion, potential housing can be added to following vacant sites:

- Jesuit Retreat / Event Center and Manresa Phase 2 – Planned Unit Development [PUD] with style and density of Creekside Oaks that includes 10% affordable units.
- 479 Los Altos Ave. – PUD with style and density of Creekside Oaks that includes 10% affordable units
- 531 Rosita Ave. – Subdivide to 10,000 ft² lots and split lots.
- El Monte / Fremont – one affordable unit.
- Woodstock – If fire damaged trees on north lot do not survive, split lot for two affordable units. In past years homeless have used these lots.

Thank you for your consideration! Jim Wing, Milverton Road, Los Altos

From: [Paul Baker](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Agenda Item 7, July 12, 2022 - Housing Element Draft
Date: Sunday, July 3, 2022 6:10:31 PM

Dear Mayor Enander and Members of the City Council,

The release of the Draft Housing Element is a big step forward for the City of Los Altos. The document is comprehensive and will serve as an excellent plan to improve the quality of life in Los Altos. Congratulations to the City Council for leading the production of this plan.

The rezoning plans for the downtown core, including permitting mixed use (housing above the shops), allowing housing on the other side of San Antonio and planned use of parking plazas for housing will permit the construction of a more lively and walkable downtown. If the City can commit to building the 100+ housing units on the parking plazas in the Housing Element we can be more certain that it will actually happen. Dealing with parking requirements for these units (either by reducing the requirements per unit or permitting parking spots that are not directly connected to the units) will be important for actually allowing these units to be built. One of the great things about living downtown would be that a car might not be needed most of the time - if this could be achieved, it would reduce congestion and pollution, so would be a big win for the City.

Rezoning Altos Oaks, Rancho and adjusting the Loyola Corners plans to permit more and better integrated housing is a great idea, I'm glad to see it in the plan. I am also very supportive of including housing on church properties in the City. Although some church owned parcels are noted on the parcel list, the zoning proposals don't include zoning these parcels for multi-family housing. This would make these parcels much easier to use for housing. Tiny houses or ADUs on church properties would also be a way to add housing on these sites.

The Housing Element includes planned City decisions that will make building more housing in Los Altos possible. Once the zoning changes are complete, it should be possible to make the planning commission the group that ensures that development conforms to the plan, reducing the City Council's work load and speeding the approval process. Other process changes suggested in the Housing Element are also positive steps towards reducing time and cost for development.

The Housing Element Draft is excellent work, once it is approved I look forward to advocating for more inclusive housing in Los Altos.

Thank you,

Paul Baker
Los Altos resident since 1981

From: [Paul Baker](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Draft Housing Element
Date: Sunday, July 3, 2022 6:10:53 PM

Dear Chair Doran and Members of the Planning Commission,

The release of the Draft Housing Element is a big step forward for the City of Los Altos. The document is comprehensive and will serve as an excellent plan to improve the quality of life in Los Altos.

The rezoning plans for the downtown core, including permitting mixed use (housing above the shops), allowing housing on the other side of San Antonio and planned use of parking plazas for housing will permit the construction of a more lively and walkable downtown. If the City can commit to building the 100+ housing units on the parking plazas in the Housing Element we can be more certain that it will actually happen. Dealing with parking requirements for these units (either by reducing the requirements per unit or permitting parking spots that are not directly connected to the units) will be important for actually allowing these units to be built. One of the great things about living downtown would be that a car might not be needed most of the time - if this could be achieved, it would reduce congestion and pollution, so would be a big win for the City.

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The Housing Element Draft is excellent work, once it is approved I look forward to advocating for more inclusive housing in Los Altos.

Thank you,

Paul Baker
Los Altos resident since 1981



July 5, 2022

Chair Doran and Members of the Planning Commission
City of Los Altos
1 N. San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

Re: Agenda Item Draft Housing Element, Planning Commission meeting July 7th

Dear Chair Doran and Members of the Planning Commission:

The League continues to support a comprehensive plan to address housing that follows State law, and we thank the Staff and LWC for a Draft Housing Element that provides bold steps towards a compliant Housing Element. That said, we have some major concerns.

First, regarding the Site Inventory, we would like to see street addresses along with APN#s as these are easier for the public to understand; likewise, we would like the downtown parking plazas to be identified with their Lot numbers as they are in the Downtown Vision. Second, we are pleased to see that a large buffer has been proposed. However, we think this buffer could rapidly disappear if the recommended rezonings and programs are not put in place.

In addition, many sites listed are unlikely to be developed. For example, all the downtown parking plazas are listed. It is unrealistic to think that all will be developed with housing as the City will want to retain some surface parking and one parcel has already been designated for a potential theater. Therefore, the projected number of units on each lot is unrealistic. However, perhaps the total projected number for all the lots (138) could be a goal for one or two of the lots, better explained as part of Program 1.H. Also, for any of these sites to be attractive to affordable housing developers, as is discussed in Programs, the density/height must be increased, and the City will need to provide financial resources.

Other sites such as Draegers have been recently remodeled, making it unlikely they will be developed with housing during the next Housing Element cycle. Spokespeople for the two churches designated have stated they have no interest in building housing. Foothill Crossing, projected for 80 units, recently signed a long-term lease with a major new tenant and has expressed no interest. We suggest that these sites and others be more vigorously vetted before they are included in the site inventory.

We applaud many of the programs. We especially like Program 1.H with its specific timeline for developing affordable housing on at least one downtown parking plaza. But without some City financing and upzoning, this program is unrealistic.

Another program the City should include is an Affordable Housing Overlay Zone for the downtown parking lots as well as other areas of the City. The City should meet with developers to see what needs to be included in order to encourage housing, i.e., height, density, fees, setbacks, etc.)

We also commend the following programs: 1.B re the CT District, 1.C re the OA District, 1.E re Loyola Corners and 1.F re Village Court. However, we would like to see specifics, such as allow an additional story, rather than “increase building heights” (1.B), and, again, specific proposed modifications for density and height (1.E).

Program 1.I to incentivize Downtown lot consolidation is also commendable, and we recommend that lot consolidation be encouraged for other areas such as Sherwood Triangle, but there is a lack of commitment to measurable success criteria. This program and others should have metrics-based objectives.

We have long advocated that the City adopt a commercial linkage fee as envisioned by an enabling ordinance adopted four years ago (Muni Code 3.49.070, Ord. No. 2018-444), but don’t understand why this should take till the end of 2025. Re ADUs, we strongly support providing permit ready standard ADU plans (2.D), but don’t like the verbiage “consider permit fee waivers...”as once again this reflects a lack of commitment.

All the programs listed under Goal 3 to Remove constraints to the development of housing should be included, but we especially recommend updating the parking requirements (3.A) and Amending design review process (3.H). Some specific changes to parking requirements could be promised in the Housing Element based upon the draft parking ordinance approved by the Planning Commission in 2018, such as reducing the width of parking spaces, and lane dimensions, creating a program with in-lieu parking fees, along with reducing parking for senior and deed-restricted units, and specific requirements for buildings with mechanical lifts. A parking in-lieu fee program would allow development on smaller lots downtown where the owners cannot provide the required parking on site and would generate funds to expand and enhance the parking supply. The Design Review process will be improved by eliminating the DRC as a separate body and by eliminating story poles and ensuring that all design standards are objective. Programs 3.B and 3.C are necessary for some of the sites listed in the inventory to be developed.

Program 5.B re the City’s contract with Alta Housing should be updated to reflect the recent Council discussion with Alta and the possibility that another administrative agency might be retained at the end of Alta’s contract next year.

Finally, we would urge the City to commit to providing some safe parking for vehicle-dwellers, whether on City-owned property or by working with faith-based institutions. As the Housing Element notes, several of the churches have large parking lots; similar lots are being used for safe parking in other nearby communities.

In summary, we hope all the programs proposed in the Draft Housing Element will be adopted with some additions and changes to make the programs and timelines more specific.

(Please send any questions about this email to housing@lwvlamv.org)

Karin Bricker, President LWV of Los Altos/Mountain View Area
Cc: Gabe Engeland. Nick Zornes Angel Rodriguez

From: [Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance](#)
To: [Public Comment](#); [City Council](#)
Cc: [Gabriel Engeland](#)
Subject: Public Comment Agenda Item #7: Sixth Cycle Housing Element 7/12/22
Date: Wednesday, July 6, 2022 4:59:59 PM
Attachments: [LAAHA Letter #1 about Draft HE 2022 \(for CC\).pdf](#)

Hello City Council members,

Please find attached a letter from LAAHA regarding the Draft Housing Element.

Thank you,
Daphne Ross

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Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance

To educate and inspire the Los Altos community to build housing that is affordable for our workforce.



July 5, 2022

To Mayor Enander, Vice Mayor Meadows, and Councilmembers,

The Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance congratulates the City's planning staff in working with our consultants on the huge task of completing our draft Housing Element. In reading the draft Housing Element this week, we were very excited to see many of the proposed programs. We appreciate the City showing that we're serious about our commitment to diversifying our housing stock, removing barriers to development, and creating an environment in which we can feasibly reach our RHNA targets. We would particularly like to commend the inclusion of the following:

- Programs 1A, 1B, and 1C, specifically that the OA zone will be rezoned to allow multi-family housing. The area of San Antonio Road east of downtown is a transit-friendly and logistically practical area to develop housing.
- Program 1E, which updates the Loyola Corners specific plan. This is necessary to create a thriving neighborhood hub.
- Program 2B, creating an in-lieu fee and a commercial linkage fee so that we can bring our City in line with other cities and also so that we have funding for affordable housing in the future.
- Program 2D regarding streamlining of ADUs. We applaud the decision to hire additional staff for this purpose.

Further considerations:

1. We advocated for and enthusiastically support *Program 1.B: To continue to facilitate housing in the CT District, the City will remove the density maximum and increase the height allowed in the CT District.* Because the housing plan is relying heavily on the CT District, for almost 500 new units in addition to the pipeline, **we urge the City to clarify the height increase, by stating clearly that the City will increase the height allowance to permit at least one more story than is currently allowed.** That would allow five story buildings before a Density Bonus, and six story buildings after a density bonus. As the Draft Housing Element states, this change would align Los

Altos' development with the buildings being built in neighboring cities along the El Camino corridor.

2. All of the arguments about increasing allowable height in the CT District also apply to the Sherwood Triangle area - the CN District bound by Sherwood Avenue, El Camino Real and San Antonio Road. It is along the El Camino corridor; the City is proposing to allow more height in neighboring CT parcels; and the new mixed use district just across El Camino in Mountain View allows six story buildings and even higher ones. The city has long wanted to see development in the Sherwood Triangle, evidenced by the fact that 19 parcels in Sherwood Triangle were included in 5th Cycle Housing Element Site Inventory, all of them holdovers from the 4th Cycle Site Inventory. Currently, base zoning in the Sherwood Triangle allows two stories with the first being commercial, or a very tight three stories squeezed into 30 feet of height. These constraints, out of step with the surrounding area, are development constraints. Only one project was approved in Sherwood Triangle during this cycle.

To facilitate development in the Sherwood Triangle, **we urge the City to increase the allowable height in Sherwood Triangle to allow three stories (four stories with a density bonus).**

Moreover, for parcels not fronting El Camino or San Antonio, the City should allow all-residential buildings, as the interior parcels are not ideal for commercial use. Relaxing the zoning in this way could induce owners to build, as we've heard from at least one developer.¹ The city should also consider lot consolidation in this area as there is fragmented ownership and some small lots.

3. We are delighted to see one of our favorite proposals, housing on city-owned parking plazas, in Program 1H. **The Housing Element Site Inventory projects 138 units of housing on the parking plazas, and we urge the city to make a firm commitment to developing all 138 units.** We do not advocate developing all of the parking plazas for housing, and we do not believe it is necessary to choose which or how many parking plazas will be developed before the City adopts the Housing Element. However, regarding economies of scale, it perhaps makes sense to locate these 138 units on two parcels, instead of dividing the units over, say, six parcels.
4. We also believe that the Housing Element should commit to specific action steps regarding parking analysis. *Program 3.A: Prepare a Downtown parking plan and update parking requirements* is vague, and we know that HCD favors specificity and time limits. **The Housing Element should commit to a parking restriping program and an in-lieu parking option by the end of 2023. It should also commit to creating lower parking requirements for smaller units by the end of 2024, as well as assessing the parking usage at existing multi-family buildings and amending the requirements based on those findings.**

¹ Mircea Voskerician

Overall, the draft Housing Element for the 6th cycle is very promising, and we are excited about how the proposed programs will affect the direction of housing and development in our city.

Respectfully,

The Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance Steering Committee

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/>

From: [Elaine Haight](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Housing Element
Date: Thursday, July 7, 2022 9:57:43 AM

Dear Mayor Enander and Members of the City Council,

Thank you very much for your draft housing element. It shows that you are taking this legal process seriously, and that you truly intend to add to the very limited housing stock here in Los Altos. I am writing to address your intention to emphasize alternative transportation in your Housing Element.

It would be great if you state have **concrete changes** that would make the use of alternative transportation more desirable and convenient in Los Altos. As you probably know, people around here ride expensive bikes and bike thieves are rampant. Here are some measures that would encourage cyclists to use their bikes for everyday transportation:

1) Every time there is a “happening” in downtown, there should be a bike valet where the bikes could be parked and watched. Greentown provided this service for a Los Altos fair last year, and the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition does it regularly for other venues. Note that it is not helpful to offer a bike valet if you don’t advertise it prominently on any and all promotional materials. People will not ride their bikes to a venue if you don’t tell them upfront that there will be a safe place to park them.

2) Any new multi-family housing development must have a highly secure bike room designed into it from the start. Bike rooms are difficult to find convenient space for, and tricky to secure after the building has been built. These rooms are obviously huge targets for bike thieves. A bike room where residents can secure their bikes must be constructed at the time that the building is constructed.

3) Charge for parking spaces in multi-family housing developments. The family decision to use a second car vs. a bicycle must have an economic price to it. If neighbors are afraid that too many cars will park overnight on city streets for free, then a neighborhood parking permit plan can be put in place.

I’m sure you understand that the more cars Los Altos accomodates (or requires parking for), the fewer housing units the city can provide. Los Altos is a wonderful place for bicycles, and with a little planning we can take advantage of this fact to allow more people to live here. Please add to the housing element a **commitment to specific measures** that encourage residents, workers and visitors to use alternative transportation.

Sincerely,
-Elaine Haight, Lisa Court, Los Altos