

Melissa Thurman

From: Catherine Nunes <nunescath@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 19, 2024 1:27 PM
To: City Council; Public Comment; Gabriel Engeland
Cc: Bruce Barton
Subject: [External Sender]Public Letter to Council re: Heritage Orchard and Need for Full Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE)
Attachments: Aug 19 2024 Council Letter and Public Comment-Historian and Historic Resource Evaluation for Heritage Orchard.pdf; PACSJ Public Letter 1 of 2 Mar82024- Los Altos Heritage Orchard copy.pdf; PACSJ Public Letter 2 of 2 City Exchange 2 Mar112024- Los Altos Heritage Orchard.pdf

Dear Mayor, Councilmembers and City Staff,
I've attached a formatted copy of this email letter in PDF form.
Thank you for your consideration and attention to these pressing Heritage Orchard, CEQA and environmental/historic preservation matters.
Sincerely, Catherine Nunes

August 19, 2024

- Subject: Heritage (Civic Center) Orchard: Requests and Clarification**
- a. City Request for LALE Patio Project Historian and CEQA Review Information
 - b. Council Request for Full Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) and Study

Dear Mayor, Councilmembers, and City Staff,

“A historical resource evaluation and intensive historic resource survey for the heritage orchard by a qualified professional in public view would be a welcome and long-requested record update by the city.”

(Catherine Nunes, Aug 6, 2024, Town Crier, “Should heritage orchard be preserved forever? City to investigate.”)

As noted in my response to the recent *Town Crier* article, although encouraged by the City’s move to hire a historian to review the possible *direct indirect and cumulative impacts* required by CEQA of the proposed LALE patio project on the Heritage (Civic Center) Orchard, the scope of work, the historian’s qualifications, and the cost/source of funds for this historian remain unclear.

Article comments from City Staff about the historian and the role in conducting a “full” CEQA process were inadequate and vague, leading many people to believe the historic study being specific *only* to the LALE patio project, versus needed foundational work for official historical resource study of the Heritage Orchard across the City Center site. [Full article link.](#)

The lack of Council oversight as well as public review needs correction as “a full CEQA process,” committed to in the article by Gabe England for the LALE patio application review requires a CEQA review with public transparency by definition, even for “private development.” This is particularly relevant for projects involving historic resources on public lands bound by city ordinances and commitments to historic preservation.

The need is real and the time is now for a full, qualified and intensive **Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE), a foundational study** for the Heritage (Civic Center) Orchard across the entire Civic Center site and all its identified elements of this historical resource.

A growing group of residents urge the Council and City staff to act upon the public and expert recommendations from organizations like the Preservation Action Council (See March public comment letters clarifying this recommendation, attached), and take immediate steps to conduct a thorough, foundational historic resource evaluation study and survey critical for the future of the Heritage Orchard.

The City of Los Altos would find a HRE is considered a best practice and also in line with the State of CA commitments made to historic preservation and the management of the integrity of its historic resources as a Certified Local Government.

Intensive HRE evaluations are more than a project-specific impact study or a land boundary survey, they would identify all elements that make up the Heritage Orchard—in this case, study would include acreage, trees, tree sites and restrictions, as well as character-defining features (agriculture and working orchard operations) and context-defining connections to historic time period, the region, environmentally-sensitive features and other structures like the J Gilbert Smith House. Meetings and conversations with both the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and the California Preservation organization reveal a number of technical resources on how to conduct an intensive HRE, and the unique needs of CEQA without exemptions for historic property evaluations. These are available for City staff, commissioners and particularly for Certified Local Governments, and may be helpful guides.

For example, as noted in the Preservation Action Council recommendation letter #1, a foundational, part of an intensive HRE would specifically study and identify a map with **APOE's (Areas of Potential Effects)** that could inform construction and projects simultaneously impacting the Heritage Orchard—Library, LAYC, City Hall Patios, Library, Smith House/FOLA area for dog parking, Tree Removal permit of Northeast Grove, underground utility upgrades across the site. This mapped part of the evaluation can also better inform the Maintenance and funding needs for agricultural operations and restoration of this public land.

We urge the participation of the Historic Commission, Environmental Commission, Parks and Recreation and Planning Commission with outside qualified historians and agricultural land use experts, and even consideration of a cross-discipline community and commission Task Force to oversee the foundational HRE work. With over 15 years of preservation work, research and knowledge of historic orchards and the region, I'd be happy to participate and look forward to speaking with you further.

To City Staff: Please provide public release of the name of the contracted historian, the scope of the review for the LALE project and Orchard, the oversight and source materials used, and details on the entire CEQA review process (what is being studied) for this LALE patio project, and if what costs (\$) and resources) are being funded by the City. If this is something requiring a public records request, please advise.

To City Council: Residents urge you take direct action to review reinstitute oversight for the review of the Library Patio Project, and all projects on the Civic Center site that sit in or adjacent to the Heritage Orchard, immediately fund a full, qualified Historic Resource Evaluation, and meet the City's commitments to historic preservation as a Certified Local Government.

Sincerely,

Catherine Nunes

35 year resident, and representative for the working group, Preservation Action League-Los Altos

Attachments:

- March 8, Public Comment and Recommendation, Preservation Action Council
- March 11, Public Comment and Response to City Letter, Preservation Action Council

August 19, 2024

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Catherine Nunes

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Attachments: March 8, Public Comment and Recommendation, Preservation Action Council
March 11, Public Comment and Response to City Letter, Preservation Action Council



PAC* SJ

**PRESERVATION ACTION
COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE**

**PRESERVATION ACTION
COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE**

42A South First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Phone: 408-998-8105

www.preservation.org

March 8, 2024

Los Altos City Council
1 N San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

VIA EMAIL (council@losaltosca.gov, PublicComment@losaltosca.gov)

Public Comment for Item Not on City Council Agenda 3/12/2024

Dear Councilmembers,

The Preservation Action Council of San Jose (PAC* SJ) is a membership-driven non-profit organization dedicated to preserving San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley region's unique and diverse architectural and cultural heritage through advocacy, education, and civic engagement. We write today concerning an issue in Los Altos that a number of our members have recently brought to our attention: a proposed library expansion project within or adjacent to the Los Altos Heritage Orchard, a certified historic resource and a significant cultural landscape positioned both literally and figuratively within the civic heart of the City of Los Altos.

We understand that the project has been initially determined exempt from CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) review and is proceeding without a proper analysis of its potential impacts to the environment, which include, per CEQA standards and definitions, historic and cultural resources like the Los Altos Heritage Orchard. With our organization's 30+ years of experience monitoring and participating in environmental reviews and project entitlements in San Jose and the surrounding region, we strongly encourage the City of Los Altos to initiate a more robust, transparent, and legally defensible determination of findings relative to this project's potential impacts to the historic integrity, physical configuration, and operational viability of the Orchard. At a minimum, this analysis should include a Historic Resources Evaluation (HRE) by a qualified cultural resources professional meeting the SOI (Secretary of the Interior) Standards for preservation planning. Such an HRE would include a clearly delineated boundary of the historic resource, as well as a defined Area of Potential Effect (APE), recognizing the potential impacts of adjacent undertakings. It would also define the resource's character-defining features and identify both tangible and intangible elements of its unique historic, agricultural, and cultural significance.

PAC* SJ BOARD

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PAC*SJ

**PRESERVATION ACTION
COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE**

PRESERVATION ACTION
COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE

42A South First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Phone: 408-998-8105

www.preservation.org

Not only would this analysis better inform and guide you as decision-makers, but would also provide the general public a better opportunity to understand both the benefits and potential impacts not only of this current library expansion project, but of any future projects or decisions that could impact, either negatively *or* positively, the integrity and stewardship of the Los Altos Heritage Orchard, one of Los Altos's most important historic and cultural resources.

Sincerely,

Ben Leech
Executive Director
Preservation Action Council of San Jose

cc: Gabriel Engeland, Los Altos City Manager (gengeland@losaltosca.gov)

*PAC*SJ Public Exchange and Response with City of Los Altos Following Inquiry re: Heritage Orchard and Proposed Encroachment of Library Patio Project*

Re: Los Altos Heritage Orchard environmental review

Ben Leech <ben@preservation.org>

Mon, Mar 11, 2024 at 10:18 PM

To: jolie.houston@berliner.com, publiccomment@losaltosca.gov

Cc: gengeland@losaltosca.gov, nzornes@losaltosca.gov

My apologies for not cc'ing all to my earlier response to Mr. Engeland's email below. Resending to all recipients. Thank you.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Ben Leech <ben@preservation.org>

Subject: **Re: Los Altos Heritage Orchard environmental review**

Date: March 11, 2024 at 7:53:57 PM PDT

To: Gabriel Engeland <gengeland@losaltosca.gov>

Cc: nzornes@losaltosca.gov

Mr. Engeland,

Thank you for your reply and for your additional background on the Heritage Orchard issue. I hope it was clear (and apologize if it was not) that our comments were in no way meant to be adversarial or express a position for or against the LALE proposal at this point in time, for as you rightly point out, we have not seen the proposal and do not know how (or even if) it would impact the Orchard as a historic resource. We are also aware that this is a private project, not a City-led project. But as you know, the City will play the role of Lead Agency in any environmental review, so I believe our comments were appropriately directed.

You are correct that we were not aware that the City Council had explicitly directed Staff to undertake all proper environmental review at the appropriate time in the planning application process. This is encouraging and appreciated. Our initial position, while perhaps not fully informed, was in response to the attached and excerpted Notice of Exemption, which I would still assert is not entirely clear in scope and could conceivably be interpreted as an exemption for the entire project through final design review.

Shortly after my email, I also received a call from Nick Zornes, who clarified that the NOE was only intended to exempt the decision to authorize acceptance of a development proposal from LALE. This is an entirely reasonable determination if that is indeed the limit of the NOE project scope.

Whether or not the project as submitted will ultimately merit a full CEQA review, PAC*SJ still strongly encourages the City of Los Altos as Lead Agency to require a full Historic Resource Evaluation as part of the project applicant's submission. This is both a best practice in California and a requirement in most Certified Local Government jurisdictions that we are familiar with.

I'm happy to discuss this further with you at your convenience.

Sincerely, **Ben Leech**

Executive Director

Preservation Action Council of San Jose 408-998-8105 (office)

On Fri, Mar 8, 2024 at 4:28 PM Gabriel Engeland <gengeland@losaltosca.gov> wrote:

Thank you for the email, Mr. Leech. It appears that your membership has misinformed you with regards to this project.

The project you are referring to is being brought forward by the Los Altos Library Endowment (LALE), which is a private organization and is not associated with the City. No project has been approved as no application has been submitted or received by the City.

The City Council has received two presentations from LALE on the concept of a library patio project. The City Council did not approve a project, but they did provide feedback to LALE that should be incorporated into any application that may be submitted. Because the proposed project would take place on City property it was important for the Council and the public to receive and discuss potential concepts. As you know, the City is required by State law to complete a CEQA analysis, but the City Council also explicitly included that a full, transparent CEQA process would take place as part of their direction to Staff in analyzing any potential application that may come forward.

As I am sure you understand, the City cannot make an analysis of any potential impacts to the environment, including CEQA standards and definitions, until a project application is received. The project location, size, scope, etc. have changed from the initial proposal to the last concept discussed in public and presented to the City Council. It is my understanding that LALE does intend to submit an application for a project, but the project will look different than the last one discussed in public at the City Council meeting. In order to complete a CEQA analysis the City needs to see a complete and final proposed project as part of an application. And as I have stated, this has not taken place.

The City has ensured the process has been both public and transparent to date and will continue to do so. Once an application is submitted by the applicant the City will be able to complete a full analysis, including CEQA review, as you request in your letter. The application will be processed in accordance with the City Code and all applicable State laws. I am sorry that your membership did not provide you with accurate information.

If you would like to discuss further, please let me know.

Thanks,

Gabe

Latest Los Altos news at your fingertips: [Sign up for the City Manager Weekly Update.](#)

Gabriel Engeland

**City Manager, City of
Los Altos**

(650) 947-
2740 | www.losaltosca.gov
1 N. San Antonio Road |
Los Altos, CA 94022

From: Ben Leech <ben@preservation.org>
Sent: Friday, March 8, 2024 3:32 PM
To: City Council <council@losaltosca.gov>; Public Comment
<publiccomment@losaltosca.gov>
Cc: Gabriel Engeland <gengeland@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: Re: Los Altos Heritage Orchard environmental review

To the Los Altos City Council:

I am submitting the attached letter for public comment on an item not on the agenda for the Los Altos City Council meeting of 3/12/2024. Please enter and comment into the public record for the City Council meeting packet.

Thank you,

Melissa Thurman

From: Lynn Emrick <emrick1983@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 25, 2024 6:09 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: PoliceWeb; trustees@mvla.net; tracey.runeare@mvla.net; derek.miyahara@mvla.net
Subject: September 27, 2024 City Council meeting

Dear Los Altos City Council, MVLA Board, LAHS Administrative Staff, and members of Los Altos Police Department,

I'm writing in advance of the upcoming City Council meeting August 27 on the matter of parking around LAHS, agenda #10.

As a very long time neighbor, supporter of LAHS, parent of three LAHS student graduates and I myself as a LAHS alumni, I wish to thank all parties for their engagement with our community about our concerns for safety since last year's unfortunate confusing and dangerous striping of Jardin. After a year of meetings and input, this year's improvements are an improvement as it is less confusing for drivers and safer for bikers on the north side of Jardin with the wider bike lane when parents aren't parking in that bike lane to drop off students or waiting to pick them up in the afternoon. We all appreciate the increased number of parking spaces in the school's main parking lot and the removal of parking permit fees. The monitoring by LAHS Staff and Police during the first few days at the beginning of school is greatly appreciated. However in week two, several neighbors have been monitoring the traffic. The same chaos exists with drop offs on both sides of the street (very few in the drop off area), drop offs on the corners where it is marked with white striping, students crossing nowhere near any of the crosswalks, cars stopped in the middle of the lanes to drop off students, and u turns everywhere. It is as if no paint or signs exist at all after all the efforts and money that has been spent. Last Friday we were talking to one of the teachers who was monitoring the area of Jardin near the tennis court entrance. He observed all the illegal movement and even acknowledged that the school is directing students to not use a portion of the new bike lane on the south side because of cars crossing the bike lane for parking and drop off (not in the drop off zone). This teacher did not redirect cars or students, he just observed. Clearly at least two crossing guards are needed for safety purposes. We also noticed many staff cars parked on Jardin and on Los Ninos Way. The parking on Los Ninos seems even worse than last year.

The following additions need to be made in the near future to accommodate neighbors and students:

1. Add no parking within a one block radius of the school would be optimal (as per the suggestion of the City Engineer in his detailed report last spring) to alleviate the dangerous congestion of moving cars, sitting cars in the middle of the street as they drop of students on the side streets before they get to Jardin creating a backup on Los Ninos, Distel and Casita and the many parked cars on the narrow side streets which this new school year has added up to 30 cars on Los Ninos alone. These conditions are dangerous to the student walking from their cars towards the school, not to mention the total disruption to residents who can't park in front of their own homes and visitors, repair persons, care givers, babysitters, etc. have no place to park. Residential parking permits would make more residents happy as they would no longer feel restricted in their own homes. Students have stated many times to school officials that they park in the neighborhood because it is easier for them to exit at lunch and the end of the day. If parking restrictions were within a one block radius, this would make neighborhood parking less convenient so hopefully students would park on campus or find other means of transportation. Whatever the parking decision, all streets surrounding the school need to have equal parking restrictions.
2. Parking enforcement on Jardin and the surrounding streets is critical. Students continue to block mail boxes, fire hydrants and driveways. Last week our driveway was blocked twice. Once we called the police and when the police came out, his solution was to move our trash cans to allow us to angle out of our driveway but that did not solve the problem of other family members being able to enter our

driveway. Blocking driveways is illegal, why is this being ignored? No ticket or warning was given to the illegally parked car.

3. LAHS needs to find more on-campus parking for students and staff and continue its efforts to encourage students to apply for permits and/or consider whether permits are even needed (students may decide to skip the added hassle of applying for a permit, even if it's free, and instead park in the neighborhood). Convert dead space to parking space by the side of the tennis courts and baseball diamond (like it used to be in the past). Even now there are way too many Visitor slots in the main lot, even after Visitor spots have now been added to the staff lot near the administration buildings. And a lot of slots in the main lot are labeled for the district/school vans. These vans should move to the side of the school parallel to Alicia. A recent drive-by of the solar-paneled school parking lot shows that the lot is used primarily for staff vs. students; this proves why the students have to park on neighborhood streets. As a good neighbor to the residents, LAHS should continue to seek parking improvements to continue to garner good will from the neighbors that helped support "Friday Night Lights" and most recently, costly Bond Measures. Construction bids should have addressed parking for increased student population. There is still time to consider how to add parking on campus.
4. It is concerning regarding the proposed "No left Turn" at Casita as it forces a large number of drivers to turn right towards the very congested part of Jardin and as it has been observed by many, the cars stop in the middle of the driving lane on Jardin to drop off or pick up students or make illegal u-turns to get to the correct side of Jardin to drop students off. This not only creates congestion and back up, but it is also very dangerous for the students now crossing the street nowhere near a crosswalk.
5. If there are residents on a particular street who acknowledge they are not severely impacted by student parking and don't want restrictions on their street, then there should be discussion to see if their wishes can be accommodated. However, the streets that are severely impacted (Los Ninos, Distel, Casita are the worst), need relief. Possibly the City could take a survey street by street, similar to what was done in 2003, 2006 and 2010 when the existing parking restrictions were put in place, that would be the most fair.

Sincerely,
Lynn Emrick, 437 Los Ninos Way

Melissa Thurman

From: Mike Emrick <mike.emrick21@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 8:00 AM
To: Public Comment
Cc: trustees@mvla.net
Subject: Public Hearing Item 10 - City Council Meeting 8/27/2024

Dear Los Altos City Council and MVLA Board,

I'm writing in advance of the upcoming city council meeting August 27, 2024 on the matter of parking restrictions around LAHS (Public Hearing Item 10).

This year's Jardin improvements are an improvement as it is less confusing for drivers and safer for bikers on the north side of Jardin with the wider bike lane. We all appreciate the increased number of parking spaces in the school's main parking lot and the removal of parking permit fees. The monitoring by LAHS Staff and Police during the first few days at the beginning of school is greatly appreciated. This enforcement should continue throughout the school Year. Also, the council should consider a crossing guard with respect to Jardin. Something the district should pay for!

The following additions need to be made in the near future to accommodate neighbors and students:

1. I believe adding no parking within a one block radius of the school would be optimal (as per the suggestion of the City Engineer in his detailed report last spring) to alleviate the dangerous congestion of moving cars, sitting cars in the middle of the street as they drop off students on the side streets before they get to Jardin creating a backup on Panchita, Los Ninos, Distel and Casita and the many parked cars on the narrow side streets This new school year has added up to 30 cars on Los Ninos alone. These conditions are dangerous to the student walking from their cars towards the school, not to mention the total disruption to residents who can't park in front of their own homes and visitors, repair persons, care givers, babysitters, etc. have no place to park.
2. Residential parking permits would make some residents happy as they would no longer feel restricted in their own homes. Students have stated many times to school officials that they park in the neighborhood because it is easier for them to exit at lunch and the end of the day. If parking restrictions were within a one block radius, this would make neighborhood parking less convenient so hopefully students would park on campus or find other means of transportation. Whatever the parking decision, all streets surrounding the school need to have equal parking restrictions.
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4. Parking enforcement on Jardin and the surrounding streets is critical. Students continue to block mailboxes, fire hydrants and driveways. Last week our driveway was blocked twice. Although it is against California Code Violation (22500-(e)) no ticket or warning was given to the illegally parked car.
5. LAHS needs to find more on-campus parking for students and staff and continue its efforts to encourage students to apply for permits and/or consider whether permits are even needed (students may decide to skip the permit application, even if it's free, and instead park in the neighborhood). Convert dead space to parking space by the side of the tennis courts and baseball diamond (like it used to be in the past). As a good neighbor

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6. It is concerning regarding the proposed "No left Turn" at Casita as it forces a large number of drivers to turn right towards the very congested part of Jardin and as it has been observed by many, the cars stop in the middle of the driving lane on Jardin to drop off or pick up students or make illegal U-turns to get to the correct side of Jardin to drop students off. This not only creates congestion and back up, but it is also very dangerous for the students now crossing the street nowhere near a crosswalk.

Sincerely,

Michael Emrick
437 Los Ninos Way
Los Altos, Ca 94022

Melissa Thurman

From: Couture, Terri <Terri.Couture@cbnorcal.com>
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 3:10 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: city council meeting Aug 27 agenda item 6

Dear City council

I am writing to you as a tax payer and citizen of Los Altos. I am also a member of the PARC commission, but these words are not coming from me as a commissioner.

The City council meetings are for the citizens to give you our thoughts and yet you continually ignore or refuse to listen to us to have open discussions about our concerns.

The definition of surplus land that you quote would astonish most of the Los Altans. The parking lots are not surplus, but a valuable asset. Land is incredible valuable in this town, and your denial of this is most offensive.

There is nothing more offensive than an unethical scripted move to usurp tax payer assets.

Further, why is the government not held to the same standards as the public and commercial developers? CEQA is to protect everyone from environment abuse. It astounds me that you all are not better stewards of our valuable land.

Do not turn our beautiful Los Altos into the desolate San Francisco, Oakland etc cities.

Thank you,

Terri Couture

***Wire Fraud is Real*. Before wiring any money, call the intended recipient at a number you know is valid to confirm the instructions.** Additionally, please note that the sender does not have authority to bind a party to a real estate contract via written or verbal communication.

Melissa Thurman

From: Ken Girdley <kengirdley@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 10:17 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: DO NOT Give Away Our Land

Dear Mayor & Council Members,

DO NOT give away our land.

Best Regards,

Ken Girdley
Los Altos Resident

Melissa Thurman

From: Alice Mansell <alice@mansell.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 11:46 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: [External Sender]Los Altos City Council Public Comment 8/27/24

To: Los Altos City Council
Subject: "The Oaks" Needs a Master Plan

By land sales and a deed of gift J. Gilbert and Margaret Smith let their beloved "The Oaks" home and working orchard be used first by the Los Altos Elementary School on San Antonio Road and later other portions of their land for the Hillview Elementary School and the Civic Center. Their land divestments were not always smooth. For example, at least once they had to sue (successfully) the Los Altos School District over a financial issue for monies owed to them.

Their land was more than mere "dirt" to them. J. Gilbert's mother was buried under her favorite oak tree she could see from her bedroom window. Their own ashes were placed together under an oak on their land. They never had children of their own so their fruit orchard trees, oaks, and the home he built with his own hands were in many ways their children. They did their best to try to ensure legally as much of their land as possible and their home would remain as an example of a family working orchard to benefit future generations of Los Altoans as they witnessed land use changes in our area from working orchards to ever denser housing and commercial buildings.

Yesterday, I spoke to the Los Altos Historic Commission about two items on their 2024/25 Work Plan:

"3. Review Ongoing Efforts to preserve the Historic Landmark Apricot Orchard
"4. Provide a venue for public engagement regarding the city's heritage by safeguarding historic resources"

During their meeting the Historic Commissioners stated they won't add any new agenda items for their commission to discuss the escalating building encroachments at the orchard within the last year unless the Los Altos City Council directs them to do so. The encroachments include City staff with no public review "setting aside" land in Fall 2023 with healthy trees by not allowing the addition of new drip irrigation lines for those healthy trees and their rows for the Los Altos Youth Center (LAYC) expansion, Los Altos Library Endowment

(LALE) Library courtyard, and new underground utility lines as well as new pavement for parking and new structures being built now as well as the "possible" police building expansion mentioned by City staff as one reason, announced on June 26, 2024, to bulldoze 30% of the orchard.

Attached are City plans and documents for active construction projects on Civic Center land that directly and cumulatively impact the State designated historic resource of the Heritage Orchard and which are changing, altering and damaging the integrity of this historic resource.

In mid-June 2024, when I requested a copy of the approved \$4,500,000 LAYC remodeling plans to become private City staff offices and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) plans, too, City staff informed me those plans were exempt from administrative review including any reviews with any commissioners or Council, as well as any public review, and were "copyrighted" thus not available for any public review.

Staff also stated the City decisions for these plans were "exempt" from all public-facing environmental and City design review, not even needing one public discussion for the "best use" of public facility buildings and public lands. Then, with both of those plans complete by January 2023 [sic], the City staff determined that the site improvements (interior and exterior) were not larger than 1000 square feet, and thus did not require any expanded design review required by City ordinance 14.078 for public facilities. This is inconceivable as the LAYC project is gutting a 6,000-square-foot building, tearing out the back patio, and adding tall fencing and walkways over orchard land which had healthy trees in Summer 2023. Hearty survivors who'd lived through recent years of drought when City staff deliberately declined to allow any irrigation in the whole orchard.

Ever since as the staff's demolition by neglect of our Smith historic orchard resource, while attending Los Altos commissions this summer I've heard staffers say things like "trees won't grow" on the land close to the Library or along the road by the police building. "It's just dirt" to them who want more parking spaces between LAYC and the Library and across the road where three old apricot trees survive by the police station communications tower and Friends of the Library storage sheds. At a PRA&C Commission meeting in June 2024, a staffer said the staff preference for the Dog Park plans for lost Library parking spaces is take out all of the police lawn and two nearby old apricot trees and put there "reserved" staff parking spaces with some set aside for public use.

The City filed a CEQA exemption notice (March 2024, NOE) to keep their EOC plans from any public environmental review, including an historical resource impact study which would have involved the Historical Commission (even in an oversight capacity to outside historian landscape experts) as well as the Planning Commission. Interesting timing that filing given City staff declared a sudden emergency to remove two big oaks on the EOC project plans dated January 2023. Trees were removed with no updated arborist's report despite having a City contract with an on-call certified arborist company for such emergency tree "evaluation" and tree work. Thus, in March 2023 [sic] two 50+ inch diameter old oaks visible to Mrs. Smith Sr.'s bedroom window and with no public permit notice, those trees within three hours were cut down one early morning. CEQA paperwork box ticked: "no trees" to be removed for the EOC project. Thus, no paperwork trigger to require an environmental or historic resource study. In Spring 2024 those old oak's roots were so big it took many dozers to root them out of the new EOC generator's drainage field. No eyeballs on site to look for the bones or any other relics of Mrs. Smith, Sr.

The staff's paperwork claims are the EOC and LAYC projects are outside of the "boundaries" of the historic resource as they define it with no surveys or one professional historian public study, all at the same time the City staff and some political leadership started questioning the existence of all or any boundaries to the Heritage Orchard, as they continued allowing shrinkage of the Orchard acreage and altering the integrity of the resource.

By exemption of CEQA review and unqualified exemption of the City design review process using staff discretion on what square footage was considered "site improvements", the City Council in March 2024 issued a blank check for \$4,500,000 for the LAYC office project without any public plans review, a project which has significantly already damaged the Orchard as well as skirted municipal code and historical preservation ordinances. By May 2024, demolition and construction began for both the EOC and LAYC projects without posted public permits or public plan review, including for the LAYC project cutting down healthy orchard trees and with planned paving over two rows of "unirrigated" tree sites to build new private City staff patios, new public walkways, another utilities yard, with extensions 20 feet into the orchard lands as well as new parking spaces inside the orchard.

I obtained the LAYC and EOC plans through a public records request in July 2024. None of those plans were presented by staff to Council or any commissioners—Planning, Historic, Park & Rec, Environmental— for review before rows of trees were removed or left unirrigated in Fall 2023 to die by neglect in the apricot orchard.

Although nine City projects specific to the Heritage Orchard are noted below, I'd like to highlight three active City projects that help clarify the need for your immediate involvement. The January 2023 building plans for the LAYC (\$4,500,000) and EOC (\$800,000) projects, and the Library Patio Project (\$1,000,000).

Among the documents for the EOC, is the newly found February 2023 negative CEQA document stating "no trees would be removed" for the EOC project despite removing in March 2023 the two scenic, mature heritage oaks next to the Bus Barn, both larger 50 inch diameter. Removed after staff claimed a sudden "emergency" with a contradictory old arborist report and no permit, trees noted in the EOC building plans as the site for new EOC generator's drainage field, and later half of the site of the June 2024 proposed Dog Park (\$1,000,000). There was no public discussion of the historic nature of these trees which at one time were part of the now stripped Historic Tree inventory. Is this something the Historic Commission or City Council will ever look into as it appears management of our City's historic inventory assets lists has been overlooked in the Historic Commissions work plans for more than two years?

In August 2024, a new potentially damaging project for the Heritage Orchard of undergrounding new utility lines across the Civic site started on the east side LAYC, without public plans or review. After another public records request, I confirmed that this was "an add-on project" in plans dated March 2024. City staff only gave me January 2023 LAYC and EOC plans in my records request from July 2023, plans I printed out in July. The newer March 2024 LAYC plans I obtained in August 2024 include the boring of more underground utility lines to LAYC and to the Police Station underneath the Heritage Orchard. A construction crew chief of the LAYC project told me about the "add-on" contract work which includes a new fiber line to connect to the police building's existing server room as well as a new electrical "emergency" line. He told me the bores were supposed to be 10 feet underground to prevent harm to the orchard trees. I inspected one boring access hole within three feet of an old apricot orchard tree and saw the bored lines were not more than 2 feet underground. I photographed pieces of chewed up large tree roots on the ground by the boring access holes.

Signs and handouts in the orchard today with Museum and City logos say, "*No trees will be harmed*" but the visual piles of dirt say something different. Boring holes are not deep enough to avoid roots and thick root pieces appearing to be from apricot orchard trees are on the dirt next to the diggings. The LAYC plans also reveal the addition of a newly paved parking area, once again paving over unirrigated tree sites on the historic orchard

lands despite no study of the impacts of that new pavement on tree growing conditions in the orchard area by the playground and lawn's dog sculpture.

The digging, damaging construction, and tear out/cut down of the Heritage Orchard space is out of control, from all sides and underground, forever changing, altering, and damaging the Heritage Orchard historic resource you have been tasked to protect and preserve.

Please look closely at the LAYC plans to see new fence heights, new hardscape, and new above-ground utility fenced yard as well as the planned 6-foot fenced, private patios for the new staff private office and new parking spaces. All those exterior LAYC additions and all underground lines are deemed by staff to be "flat" work which staff relies upon to claim the projects fall within City ordinances for what sized projects must have or need no public review, as well as environmental, commission/administrative review with meaningful public transparency and opportunity for input. Council has allowed for the LAYC and EOC projects its staff to have 100% design discretion and operate by arbitrary and manipulative uses of exemption ordinance language to remove the need for following all City ordinances, ignoring commissions' review, and avoiding environmental and historic public studies.

Nevertheless, for historical resources under the State of California CEQA laws for environmental review, the City "shall not" use an exemption for review if a project "may" cause an impact on a historical resource like the Heritage Orchard. And as a Certified Local Government, our City has a set of obligations and commitments to our historic resources that your Historic Commission is named in oversight for preserving the integrity of historical resources.

There are at least 9 major City projects, contracts, and administrative actions that are impacting the Heritage Orchard that need your immediate review.

1. LAYC conversion to private City staff offices with new private patios
2. Review of LALE Courtyard project currently in internal review by City staff
3. Tree Removal Permit of Northeast Grove near police station
4. Compliance for the Museum's maintenance contract which has not produced one report such as the required Maintenance Plan since its signing last summer. The Maintenance Plan due January [sic] 2024 is still not a public document available for any public review after two drafting rounds between Museum staff and City Hall. The Museum's Annual Report for the Orchard is due this month and also is not public.

Nor have there been any public discussions at the Museum of changing the heritage orchard historic context and character-defining elements except one pay-to-participate Museum meeting last month.

5. "Add-On" Underground Utility Wiring Project for LAYC

6. City Hall's private fenced patio, new bricked patio, and new ornamental flower bed extensions

7. Lack of Maintenance for other orchard areas and trees on Civic Center site, including Northeast Grove Police Station and next to J.Gilbert Smith House by the police communications tower as well as the continued placement of Friends of the Library book sheds

8. Removal and replacement of historic signage and interpretative signage

9. Dog Park parking mitigation proposal for lost library parking spaces to remove apricot trees by the Friend's sheds and other orchard lands to have more paved parking spaces

What needs to be done? And what can you as the City Council do? The public, local preservationists and regional historic experts (like Preservation Action Council San Jose) continue to **call on the Council to fund and perform a foundational Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE)** on the Heritage Orchard resource, with an "intensive study and survey" as defined by the California State Office of Historic Preservation with outside, qualified landscape historians and experts. Not the David J. Powers' administrative review firm called upon by City staff to justify their desired CEQA exemptions.

As you know this survey and foundational evaluation goes way beyond clarifying the boundaries --it also includes in this space the elements that make up the resource including the acreage, trees, tree sites, restrictions, protections, character-defining features of a productive working orchard, AND make clear the context of the historic period it keeps with the design and function in tandem with the J.Gilbert Smith House. Our heritage orchard needs your help and preservation. This is NOT an orchard memorial, community garden or science project, ideas being floated now by the History Museum's Orchard Commons Committee. The Heritage Orchard is as the City Council in resolution 2021-477 codified it:

"a working historic orchard and city historic resource demonstrating and showcasing the City's and the region's historic agricultural roots and heritage that is maintained and kept productive."

2021 City of Los Altos Ordinance 2021-477

By all accounts, the Los Altos Historic Commission is the right governing group according to the City's Certified Local Government status to be

responsible for the oversight and to request this foundational Historical Resource Evaluation (HRE) and study to ensure this City properly manages the integrity of this valuable historic asset-the Heritage (Civic Center) Orchard. The Commission also needs to get engaged in the review and oversight of the list of 9 projects endangering this historic resource identified in this letter. It's in their 2024/5 Work Plan.

Time is of the essence, this work to care for the Heritage Orchard needs your immediate attention. You must activate the current goals of your Historic Commission's work plan, and require a special session for City Council to discuss all the recent and currently planned orchard encroachments. The Historic Orchard Resource should have a Master Plan and be listed as one of the City's major Capital Assets to ensure plans and budgets affecting it are not done piecemeal nor strictly inside City Hall by City staff with little to no public transparency. This work should be done in haste.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Alice Mansell
Los Altos, California



[CEQA Exempt Los Altos for Emergency Ops Center ENV24422-1 \(1\).pdf](#)



[Commission Hillview Dog Park PPT 24.06.18 reduced file.pdf](#)



[EOC 50"+ trees Screenshot 2024-08-02 at 9.10.47 PM.png](#)



[EOC Approved Plan Set \(1\).pdf](#)



[LAYC Approved Plan set.pdf](#)

Melissa Thurman

From: Jack Carsten <jack@carsten.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 1:27 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Ron D. Parkard
Subject: Lack of notice and public input regarding parking requirements for future developments

August 27 Council meeting had no public notice nor input regarding reduced parking for new developments.

Jack Carsten (50 year resident)

Melissa Thurman

From: Brian Korek <citizen@korek.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 1:38 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Parking Plazas are NOT Surplus Property

As a long time resident of Los Altos, I was surprised to learn that 3 members of the City Council made 2 related decisions affecting parking:

1. They agreed to reduce the number of Distel Circle parking spots from 90 down to 40 - less than half of what was originally agreed.
2. They declared 2 of our Public Parking Plazas to be "Surplus Land" that can be turned into housing without guaranteeing any public parking spaces (just as they agreed to reduce Distel Circle's public parking).

I would like to see Item #2 addressed publicly with a guaranteed minimum number of public parking spaces that can't be reduced behind closed doors at a later date.

Yours Truly,
Brian Korek

Melissa Thurman

From: Ross Katchman <rosskatch@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 3:00 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: RE Surplus Land Agenda Item August 27, 2024 City Council Meeting

Dear City Council,

This afternoon, I was made aware of the "Surplus Land" item on this evening's meeting agenda. Based on what I learned today, this topic should have more community input before any important decision is made on the use/development of the property.

Please first schedule a study inviting broad resident input and participation regarding the uses/changes to the public land/parking plazas.

Since today is the first time my wife and I have heard of this issue and a potential City Council decision this evening (which we received notice of via an email from the Friends of Los Altos - Board of Directors), I would expect other residents similarly would want an opportunity to participate in a study and to provide input in advance of any important decision.

Thank you,

Ross Katchman
371 Solana Drive

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Melissa Thurman

From: Eric Muller <eric.muller@efele.net>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 3:42 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public comment - agenda item #6 - August 27, 2024 - Surplus property

Dear Council members,

Please do not sell the parking plazas 7 & 8. It seems premature to take such a drastic and irreversible action while planning other large scale developments (park, underground parking, theater) for the downtown area.

Eric Muller
Los Altos resident.

Melissa Thurman

From: Catherine Nunes <nunescath@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 4:35 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment on Public Hearing Item #6 City Council Meeting, 8/27/2024

Re: Public Comment on Public Hearing Item #6, 8/27/2024

Dear Mayor and City Council,

Planning in the City of Los Altos is broken, plain and simple, especially on public lands.

Time and time again we see planning processes and decision-making for public lands riddled with exemptions, private-public deals, and skirting the rules to avoid public transparency and oversight.

All the while, hiding the fact that this decision and process appears manipulated to hasten development in a "free-leasing arrangement" with true costs and loss to the City and the residents simply unknown. Then the City dampens public interest and outcry by referring to it as "surplus land" to dilute the residents' attention to the matter, and to diminish the value of the parking/trees/beauty/spaces of the downtown public lands. This is shameful.

With a City unburdened by the need for real study, planning, review and discussion in claiming these decisions CEQA exempt from environmental review, or administrative oversight and review from public, commissions and Council review, we all lose much more than access to public lands.

The saddest part of all is that leaders and City planning claim this unqualified, dysfunctional decision-making to be in the name of "housing" as its overriding consideration, without any proper study, processes or public transparency to explicitly clarify those overriding considerations and submit a "no project alternative" for this project in this location as required in an EIR (Environmental Impact Report) required by the State of California. Again, it is declared CEQA review exempt.

Please deny any decisions to move forward on Item #6, gifting away our downtown-parking plazas, trees and public spaces-without a clear and proper review and understanding of the scope, processes and needed environmental review and CEQA process. This project and sale is not a master plan to solve some problem, this is a master class in bad planning and governance.

Sincerely,
Catherine Nunes
Los Altos

Melissa Thurman

From: Judy Dodge <judylynd@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 4:36 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Fwd: By the way we are selling two of the downtown parking plazas ... Did we forget to mention that to you?

Out of town in vacation, but echoing the Friends of Los Altos email below. And...lest we forget, is the proposed theater replacing parking also still in the mix? Los Altos home owner who patronizes downtown businesses all the time.

[View in browser](#)

Friends of Los Altos (FOLA)



**By the way we are selling two of the downtown parking plazas
Did we forget to mention that to you?**

t. The City of Los Altos Staff sent out a letter dated July 16th stating that two public parking plazas will be sold, either by purchase or lease. The two parking plazas, labeled “surplus property” by the city, are located behind the former Los Altos High School and Second. Each is approximately an acre in size; together they provide 226 parking spots for the new development. The letter, titled “Surplus Property Availability,” was sent to a list of over 560 developers and government entities.

For your attention, here are the specifics. The City will give priority to projects that provide at least 226 replacement parking spots. The purchaser must provide at least 226 replacement parking spots and adequate parking for residents.

ent state law, however, says that adequate parking can mean a number much closer to zero than the project.

our opinion in person at tonight's (August 27) Council meeting or send a letter to council. Age

<https://www.ci.losaltos.ca.us/municode.com/adaHtmlDocument/index?cc=LOSALTOSCA&me=9c46f4b984ed499abe8>

ppen?

City Council members are determined to turn the parking plazas into housing without holding a public hearing on the loss of parking, the impact on the City finances or the health of the downtown. This process has been completed in a timely manner, and no further public input is required. The City Council allowed City Staff to proceed without consultation or supervision. Once started, this process means that residents, Staff, and Council members are committed to the final project, with unknown consequences. Is it possible that the City could get paid nothing for the loss of parking spots in those lots, and have a housing development which provides no parking? Unfortunately, this is the reality.

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There is a majority on the Council who apparently feel that either 1) sufficient public input has already been provided, or 2) the Council is competent enough to initiate and proceed with this process without Council or resident input. Council members believe they have been given a mandate by the residents to build housing on the parking plazas, and that housing on the City and certainly, without any public review and input.

When the Vision Plan was put together for downtown, housing on one or more parking plazas was a goal. However, and this is a big "however," there was no real plan laid out for how to proceed. Residents were consulted, and if it had happened, there would be public discussion and input, as those properties are an incredibly important part of the City. When the recently completed Housing Element included the idea, after public input, the City Council informed residents that there was no concrete plan, and public discussion and input would precede any decision.

Once City Staff put out the “notice of availability” (irrespective of whether or not they obtained a permit that now appears will NOT allow for any further public discussion or input. If a developer is approved, all further discussions and negotiations will happen in closed sessions of the City Council. Lead the way! How tall? In height? What public amenities will be part of it? Will the existing parking be fully replaced and if not, how many? These important issues that need discussion and prioritization by the greater community WOULD be better addressed to those who love the charm of our downtown is that the source of that charm is being seriously eroded. Business/property owners DONATED the back portions of their properties to the City in order to create parking plazas in order to induce shoppers and diners to our downtown. If those parking plazas are now being replaced by parking spots are replaced (at a cost estimated to be \$10-15 million if above ground and \$20-30 million if underground) as a community suffer the consequences.

ks?

The current process has evolved leaves residents with no input and the City Council with very little control of the process. A recently approved low-income housing project on Distel Circle did not actually need to provide any parking. A cost analysis suggested over 100 spots would be required. The developer originally offered (and the City Council asked Council to reduce that number to 40 to decrease costs, AND THE THREE MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL VOTED TO REDUCE PARKING.

The current project has unfortunately demonstrated that despite an approved plan, the developer could and has failed to provide promised parking for the project. Such a scenario could easily play out on a much larger scale and have a significant social impact, we should also be concerned that this proposed development, along with others, is eroding downtown restaurants and retail with residential buildings, all looking to take advantage of the lack of parking. The irony is that without sufficient parking, more and more retail and restaurants are leaving downtown is in name only, with a few boutique stores and coffee shops surrounded by a sea of residential buildings. This may be financially attractive for downtown property owners. We don't think it serves the community.

should happen

will discuss the declaration of surplus land at its meeting on Tuesday, August 27, 2024, starting with the lack of public notification, input and the process need to let Council know how they feel watching via Zoom and/or sending a letter to the City Council can be found here:

<https://www.ci.losaltos.ca.gov/adaHtmlDocument/index?cc=LOSALTOSCA&me=9c46f4b984ed499abe8>

In compliance with all State laws and rules promulgated by HCD (the 800-pound gorilla in San Jose state comply with housing laws), the City Council should schedule a study session to discuss what a multi-unit housing project would look like and solicit public input (which hopefully they will actually listen to). Development on our parking plazas is just too important to allow City Staff to proceed alone and at times, appears unaware as to the impact of development on surrounding neighbors. Telling someone a housing project gets built in their backyard is just not okay. Good governance depends upon the City Council members of the City Council after having factored in input from the public.

Mark Twain both famously said “buy land, they ain’t making any more of it”. In this case a legal option would be selling the land instead of insisting on a long-term lease which would give the City board a say on the property? So, while we are reserving judgment on the actual structure of a sale or lease, the property should be essentially put out to public bid with the City indicating sale is a viable option.

Given the potential eventual impacts, we as a community should be disappointed that this process is happening without each step in the process. Equally important is that this process is happening without timely input from the public and, setting the minimum requirements for parking and addressing other considerations will have a significant impact on the viability of our downtown going forward. It sort of reminds us of someone selling your house and you have not been sold. We expect and deserve better.

Thank you for any we see it.

Los Altos - Board of Directors

Friends of Los Altos

Friends of Los Altos

Los Altos, CA 94022 & 94024

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Melissa Thurman

From: Pat Marriott <patmarriott@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 4:51 PM
To: Public Comment; Catherine Nunes
Subject: Re: Public Comment on Public Hearing Item #6 City Council Meeting, 8/27/2024

This decision -- housing on Plaza 7 and 8 -- was made when the Housing Element was approved last year. It's not new.

The parking plazas can be declared surplus land according to the law as described in the staff report.

On Tuesday, August 27, 2024 at 04:35:32 PM PDT, Catherine Nunes <nunescath@gmail.com> wrote:

[Re: Public Comment on Public Hearing Item #6, 8/27/2024](#)

Dear Mayor and City Council,

Planning in the City of Los Altos is broken, plain and simple, especially on public lands.

Time and time again we see planning processes and decision-making for public lands riddled with exemptions, private-public deals, and skirting the rules to avoid public transparency and oversight.

All the while, hiding the fact that this decision and process appears manipulated to hasten development in a "free-leasing arrangement" with true costs and loss to the City and the residents simply unknown. Then the City dampens public interest and outcry by referring to it as "surplus land" to dilute the residents' attention to the matter, and to diminish the value of the parking/trees/beauty/spaces of the downtown public lands. This is shameful.

With a City unburdened by the need for real study, planning, review and discussion in claiming these decisions CEQA exempt from environmental review, or administrative oversight and review from public, commissions and Council review, we all lose much more than access to public lands.

The saddest part of all is that leaders and City planning claim this unqualified, dysfunctional decision-making to be in the name of "housing" as its overriding consideration, without any proper study, processes or public transparency to explicitly clarify those overriding considerations and submit a "no project alternative" for this project in this location as required in an EIR (Environmental Impact Report) required by the State of California. Again, it is declared CEQA review exempt.

Please deny any decisions to move forward on Item #6, gifting away our downtown-parking plazas, trees and public spaces-without a clear and proper review and understanding of the scope, processes and needed environmental review and CEQA process. This project and sale is not a master plan to solve some problem, this is a master class in bad planning and governance.


Sincerely,
Catherine Nunes
Los Altos

Melissa Thurman

From: Prof. Tony Lima <tony@proflima.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 4:58 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: "Surplus land"

The purpose of this email is to voice my objection to declaring parts of the parking plazas surplus land. I simply do not believe that those parking spaces will actually be replaced. Have you bothered to consult with the downtown merchants or, for that matter, the residents who shop there?

The City Council is becoming increasingly authoritarian. Please stop.

Tony Lima
181 North Avalon Dr., Los Altos
650.946.7469
Sent from my iPad 

Melissa Thurman

From: Ken Girdley <kengirdley@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 5:09 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Do Not Give Away OR Sell Our Property

Dear Mayor & Council Members,

In my attempt to be brief I left out part of my message. I meant to say do not give away OR sell our property. It's ridiculous to consider those plazas surplus. We can't afford to lose those 226 parking spaces.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ken Girdley
Los Altos Resident

Melissa Thurman

From: Jean Fordis <jean.fordis@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 5:20 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Jean Fordis; Jerry Voight
Subject: Planned sale of parking lots behind State Street

Dear Members of the Los Altos City Council,

The way in which the potential sale of the parking lots has proceeded is, in a word, outrageous. While housing is at a premium and getting low-income housing very important in our expensive town, this proceeding does not appear to have had sufficient community input

A vibrant city requires sufficient housing, of course, but it also requires the citizens of the city and close-by areas to have sufficient parking that they can come to the city. Without sufficient parking, the influx of shoppers and dinners cannot possibly continue (electric cars that drop us off and pick us back up do not appear to be in the offing) and that will ultimately reduce the vitality of the city.

There does not appear to have been sufficient notice that the citizens of the city have been able to express these views. At a minimum, such views do not appear to have been taken sufficiently under consideration. I do not support NIMBY and do believe in the importance of low-income housing. But this decision seems rushed. And the opposing view points deserve to be heard and considered.

Please slow down the process and allow the citizens of Los Altos to raise their legitimate and heartfelt concerns. We love our city and want it to thrive.

Regards,
Jean Burke Fordis and Jerry Voight
280 Los Altos Court
Los Altos, CA

Melissa Thurman

From: Jane Osborn <janeosborn@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 5:45 PM
To: Public Comment; City Council
Cc: Jane Osborn; Jonathan Shores
Subject: Public comment on agenda item #6, Council Meeting on 8/27/24

Dear honorable mayor and council members.

Please postpone your final decision regarding declaring the downtown parking plazas as "surplus land."

I do not think most residents thought that the sale or lease of this land to developers was a "done deal." I think most people thought it was a concept that still was being explored.

I feel that more time is needed to reach out to residents and business owners to get their input.

When I saw the description of item #6 a couple of days ago, it never occurred to me that the city staff and council considered the heavily used and greatly appreciated downtown parking plazas to be "surplus land." These parking plazas are a critical and valued public resource, and this land is valuable and irreplaceable.

In particular, it seems that if you are going to sacrifice such a valuable public resource, it should not be primarily to benefit developers who prefer to build luxury housing for huge profits. There should be a requirement for far more than just 25% of affordable housing. Otherwise, developers and a few lucky people who are fortunate enough to be able to afford luxury housing will be the beneficiaries of a windfall, at the expense of the rest of the public, including Los Altos residents, downtown business owners and people in the surrounding communities who rely on the downtown area.

To forge ahead without getting sufficient public input regarding such a controversial issue seems as if it is a betrayal of the public trust.

If you haven't already done so, I feel it is especially critical to reach out and get sufficient input from downtown business owners. I learned about the history of the plazas only a few months ago, when a long time business owner commented at a council meeting,. He reminded everyone that the downtown business owners had donated their own property (located behind their buildings) to the city in the 1950s. At the time, there was an agreement that this land would be used specifically for parking plazas in order to support their businesses and to benefit their customers. While giving his comments, this business owner seemed very distressed, and I got the impression that many other business owners were also distressed. Unless business owners have been given sufficient opportunity to give their informed input and approval for the land to be used for other purposes, it seems as if the city's actions are a betrayal of their trust. It seemed that it would show a lack of good faith on the part of the city.

Also, it is my opinion that developers should be required to replace *all* of the lost public parking, and to provide sufficient additional parking for people living in the buildings.

Residents and business owners have been inundated with multiple controversial issues for the past decade or so, sometimes one after another, or multiple issues all at once. This is very overwhelming to most people. They need more time, outreach, and information in order to arrive at informed opinions and to give feedback to the city and council.

Please forgive the lateness of this email. I experienced a technical glitch after I initially tried to send it earlier,. Most of the email did not save and was lost and I had to re-create it.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration, and for your service to the community.

Jane Osborn
Los Altos resident

E. Jane Osborn, Ph.D. Nationally Certified School Psychologist, NCSP 24709. Licensed Educational Psychologist, LEP 1610. Cognitive and Developmental Psychology. Cell: 650-346-6390. Land Line: 650-967-5167 (Preferred Option)

Melissa Thurman

From: JOHN A EISENBERG <jeisenb558@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 5:58 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Fwd: Please do not lease or sell Los Altos downtown parking plazas

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: JOHN A EISENBERG <jeisenb558@aol.com>
Date: August 27, 2024 at 3:21:53 PM PDT
To: PublicComments@losaltosca.gov, JOHN A EISENBERG <jeisenb558@aol.com>
Subject: **Please do not lease or sell Los Altos downtown parking plazas**

Dear City Council,

I learned just today, August 27, that you are meeting today to sign off on selling or leasing downtown parking plazas for use as housing structures containing affordable housing units. These new structures may be required to contain up to 226 parking spaces, the number of spaces to be lost if our parking plazas are over built. However many of those spaces would not be available to patrons of the downtown shops as the residents of the new units would require them. Since most families have two cars only 113 units would fill them all up. This loss of parking spaces would reduce foot traffic in our State Street shops, stores and restaurants very significantly. If your plan is approved, the time required to build the new structures could easily be one to two years. This would mean no parking for folks wishing to patronize State Street businesses for that period of time and then greatly reduced parking after that as the 226 spaces will likely be used by residents.

What are you people thinking? Your proposed action will have such a negative effect on State Street businesses that many of them will be forced to close their doors. Replacing them will be much more difficult as new businesses ability to entice foot traffic will not be easy.

Perhaps you can tear down these businesses and put up more affordable housing. This is when I will seriously consider leaving Los Altos for another state.

Please hold hearings on this matter and let rational people present their views. Listen to what they present. Preserving what makes Los Altos such a lovely town is more important than blindly following State of California dictates.

Sincerely,

John Eisenberg
25 Parsons Way
Los Altos, CA 94022

Melissa Thurman

From: Alex Mendez <m.alex.mendez@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 6:05 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Cathy Mendez
Subject: Hearing 8/27 regarding "Surplus Property"

TO: City Council
FROM: Alex & Cathy Mendez, Los Altos Residents

We are unable to attend the meeting tomorrow but would like to state **it is unconscionable** the Los Altos City Council members have acted without public input to put the two public parking plazas ("surplus property" located behind State street stores between First and Second Street) available for purchase or lease. We are strongly opposed to this unilateral decision.

We believe that, in compliance with all State laws and rules promulgated by HCD, the City Council should schedule a study session to discuss the parameters around what a successful housing project would look like and solicit public input.

We are extremely unhappy with the lack of public notification, input process and decision to proceed in this manner.

Alex & Cathy Mendez
747 Arroyo Road
Los Altos, CA 94024.