



PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

The following is public correspondence received by the City Clerk's Office after the posting of the original agenda. Individual contact information has been redacted for privacy. This may *not* be a comprehensive collection of the public correspondence, but staff makes its best effort to include all correspondence received to date.

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



January 9, 2023

Re: Agenda Item # 2 – Sixth Cycle Housing Element 2023-2031

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

As we have written earlier, the LWV supports a comprehensive plan to address housing that follows State law, and we commend the Staff and LWC for recommending changes to the Draft Housing Element (HE) that hopefully will lead to having a compliant HE. The LWV also supports policies and programs to provide a decent home for every American and Californian, including subsidies at all government levels to produce this housing.

As we wrote to the Planning Commission our greatest concern is with the proposed revisions to Program 1.H. We are pleased that the timeline for implementing a program to encourage housing on City-owned Parking Plazas 7 and/or 8 has been expedited. Nonetheless, the program as described in the current HE does not prioritize the development of affordable housing on these sites, which we believe is important.

Because Los Altos has no affordable housing funds, unlike neighboring cities, the main contribution our City can make to incentivize affordable housing is to make the land free, or nearly free, for a term of 55 years or more, long enough to make a tax credit project feasible, as this is the main financing mechanism for most current affordable housing. The offer of a zero-cost land lease for 20 years to a market-rate developer providing 20% of the units to lower-income households does not incentivize more affordable housing than baseline inclusionary zoning requirements. Our below-market-rate (BMR) ordinance already requires a market-rate developer to provide 20% of the units as BMRs if they are rentals, (or 15% very low-income) so there is no added benefit to the City in this scenario. Public land should be used for the maximum public benefit, and, at this moment, the public benefit needed is affordable housing.

We agree that the City should waive development impact fees for an all-affordable project, as it did with 330 Distel Circle, but it's not clear why the City should waive applicable permit fees for a market-rate development on the Parking Plazas that includes the number of BMRs required by our ordinance already. We also do not think the City should be prioritizing housing for seniors, persons with disabilities and veterans without knowing what the needs are for various housing types or what type of financing for various targeted groups is available.

We suggest rewriting the following 2 programs, the first to prioritize affordable housing for a Downtown Parking Plaza, and the second to commit to waiving development impact fees for 100% affordable developments.

Program 1.H: Facilitate housing on City-owned sites.

The City will facilitate development of housing on City-owned sites through public-private partnerships during the planning period. City-owned Downtown Parking Plazas 7 and 8 were identified as opportunity sites that could accommodate new development, including affordable housing. The first RFP issued by the City for housing on either Parking Plaza 7 or 8 will be for affordable housing and the City will commit to selecting the development proposal that maximizes public benefit. Prior to the RFP issuance,

the City shall hire a third-party to analyze what the minimum financially feasible affordable housing production could be, based upon a minimum of 20 years of a zero-cost land lease and a commitment to provide a minimum 55-year lease. In the event the development is 100% affordable, the City will waive all applicable development impact fees per Program 2.C. The City will comply with all Surplus Land Act requirements. The City will provide a dedicated project planner to facilitate an expedited project review process.

Program 2.C: Assist in securing funding for affordable housing projects.

- Provide financial incentives including waiving City fees for 100 percent affordable housing projects.

We support the development of various types of housing on the Downtown Parking Plazas. After the first RFP has been issued and after the parking study has been completed, it might be appropriate to issue an RFP for a market-rate housing development that would be better able to provide funds for replacement parking. Again, a third-party financial analysis should precede such an RFP.

We are pleased to see that the revised HE proposes amending SB 9 and ADU ordinances ASAP to be compliant with State law. And we support earlier timelines for many programs, as HCD suggested. We commend the specific height increases for the CT and mixed-use zones. We support zoning changes for the OA District, although we prefer consistency, rather than the spot zoning recommended. However, Staff explained at the Planning Commission meeting that when the rezoning of the OA District occurs, other sites can be rezoned.

We commend the simplification of the permitting process but would prefer to see some type of metrics/measurement built into the program to monitor how much the process is actually streamlined, instead of the proposed language in 3.H, “the time...will be shortened....”

Finally, we acknowledge that the revised HE attempts to satisfy the requirements of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, particularly in the future by hiring a Housing Manager, but we believe the City has not really met the intent of this new statutory requirement (to “overcome patterns of segregation” already extant in our City), just as many cities have not. Building an all-affordable housing development for low-income households on a Parking Plaza in the center of our downtown would be a great step forward in Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing.

(Please send any questions about this email to Sue Russell at [REDACTED])

Thank you for your consideration,
Karin Bricker, President LWV of Los Altos/Mountain View Area

Cc: Gabe Engeland Nick Zornes Angel Rodriguez [REDACTED]
housingelements@hcd.ca.gov

From: [Payal B](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM 2 - 10/1
Date: Monday, January 9, 2023 4:29:02 PM

While we do support affordable housing, we think creating more housing on Altos Oaks would not be a good idea for various reasons.

-It will be unsafe for children to access McKenzie park access as the road will be a lot busier due to increased housing.

-Each office is proposed to be zoned for 6-7 units, which would mean it could be a 2-3 story. This is towering directly over the playground of the Loyola Elementary school, which is not ideal for little children's privacy. We have all limited ourselves to a single story to preserve the integrity and privacy of our neighborhood.

-Our children use the medical offices for pediatric and dental needs. Zoning it for multi family residential would motivate them to sell, making it very hard for us to access these facilities.

-PB

From: [John Meaney](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Public comment re: Draft Housing Element plan
Date: Monday, January 9, 2023 5:07:25 PM

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

John Meaney



From: [Anne Paulson](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Public Comment](#)
Cc: HousingElements@hcd.ca.gov; [Nick Zornes](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM 2 - January 10, 2023
Date: Monday, January 9, 2023 8:06:55 PM



January 9, 2023

Dear Mayor Meadows and City Council Members,

The Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance supports housing for all ages and all life stages in our community. We applaud City staff for their prompt turnaround of the new draft Housing Element. We appreciate that staff and our consultant have attempted to address HCD's comments. A couple of issues still need to be dealt with.

Program 1.H, Housing on the parking plazas

We support the League of Women Voters' position on Program 1.H. We urge the City to make every effort to build 100% affordable housing on Parking Plaza 7 or 8.

Policy 3.3, Expediting the Approval Process

We applaud the policy of expediting approvals. We would like to see the City adopt specific metrics and goals, and a timeline for measurement. For example, the city could commit to

- Being in compliance with AB 2221, which requires the City to issue a permit for an ADU within 60 days of receiving the completed application, or supplying a complete list of the reasons for denying it.
- Reducing the median time from application to granting of permit by 25% for single family homes.
- Reducing the median time from application to granting of permit by 25% for multi-family projects.
- Committing to a mid-cycle review of these goals. If the goals are not met, committing to removing further constraints or hiring more staff as necessary to achieve them.

Program 1.C, the OA District

The initial draft released to the public and reviewed by the City Council called for rezoning all of the OA District. Somehow, the first draft sent to HCD changed that, so that only the sites listed in the Site Inventory would be up-zoned. We believe that spot zoning is a poor planning strategy, introducing complexity at a time when the City is required to decrease constraints on development. We urge the City to return to the initial plan of up-zoning all of OA. We note that AB 2011 will be up-zoning the commercial sites abutting San Antonio anyway.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance Steering Committee

From: [Anirban Ray](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM 2 - 10/1
Date: Monday, January 9, 2023 10:32:37 PM

I oppose building additional housing in Altos Oaks road (OA district)

- It creates more traffic and is unsafe for children coming back from school.
- Each APN is proposed to be zoned for 6-7 units causing disruption to neighborhood privacy
- It will make Mckenzie park access unsafe

-AR

From: [Talvinder Dogra](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment Agenda Item 2 - 1/10
Date: Tuesday, January 10, 2023 4:26:56 PM

Hello!

I am a resident on Clinton Road, Los Altos.

It has come to my knowledge that all of the doctor's offices are going away and will be replaced by commercial buildings.

We have loved here for 6+ years and are in love with the community here. This is a very quiet neighborhood.

It is very safe for our kids too. Altos Oaks is not as busy despite the doctor offices. The kids can bike/walk/play without much concern.

The rezoning will disrupt all of it. There will be so much traffic on Altos Oaks that the kids may not feel as safe as now.

I request the concerned people to stop and rethink about the rezoning project.

We don't need it here.

It has been a safe and quiet neighborhood so far and we would love for it to be so please!

Thank you!

Talbinder

Clinton Road Resident

(typed on a 3×6 inch device!)

Date 2022_01_09

To: Mayor Meadows and the Los Altos City Council, Gabe Engeland, Nick Zornes, Angel Rodriguez

From: Jeanine Valadez

Subject: Public Comment Agenda Item #2 CC Mtg 2023_01_10

Re: Housing Element AFFH:

I stand firmly aligned with both the League of Women Voters of Los Altos and Mountain View (LWV) and the Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance (LAAHA) in their public comments offered for this agenda item. My particular interest and contribution to those letters focused on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH).

To that end, I wish to ask even more of the City Council and Staff as they address the current draft's shortcomings in AFFH. As I have maintained since the beginning of this process, it is difficult for me to accept the continuation of the historical legacy of both income- and racial segregation that continues in Los Altos, where I have made my home since 1989. The current Housing Element, while doing a fantastic job enabling increased housing supply in the next 8 years, does little to reckon with our tainted legacy. The simple fact that over 90% of our city is comprised of R1 zoned housing surrounded by a current and to-be-continued outer ring of denser and lower-cost housing amplifies this blemish in resounding fashion.

I echo LWV's and LAAHA's suggestion to commit at least one Downtown Parking Plaza to an all-affordable development, built on land given or leased for free to a qualified developer and manager. Yet, this is but a relatively small first step. I believe we must address the segregation inherent in our R1 zone(s). I suggest (again) any of the following:

- 1) incentivize SB9 splits (reduced fees and/or maximally streamlined process),
- 2) reduce R1-10 from 10k sq ft to 7k sq ft ("R1-07")
- 3) eliminate R1-20 and R1-40 altogether (they all become R1-07),
- 4) up-zone areas with R1-10, -20, and -40 lots currently >14k sq ft to a new "R3-C" (for "court/plex") that allows the option of 4 court-based cottages or 1 two-story four-plex on the first 15k sq ft and again for each additional 1/2 acre of sq footage,
- 5) eliminate single-story overlays to enable ADUs upstairs,
- 6) incentivize BMR ADUs: if owner rents at low-income for 5 years or very low income for 3 years, they pay no fees at all to build the ADU (or whatever rental periods where the math works)
- 7) develop a program with the county to provide an ongoing property tax break to owners who convert or build an ADU as a deed-restricted permanent BMR rental unit

I am neither a developer, nor a housing expert, so I recognize that I have not "penciled out" all the details inherent in my suggestions. Yet, as a large-lot homeowner myself, whose home sits on a parcel resulting from a decades-ago subdivided ranchita, I consider the above ideas as options that I would welcome in lots neighboring mine.

Thank you for your time in reading this,

Jeanine Valadez

Disclosure: I am a Parks and Rec Commissioner, but am submitting this as a member of the Public.