

**From:** [Cheryl Reicker](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment - PC](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comments for 9/7/23 Planning Commission Meeting, Agenda Item #2: Zone Text Amendments  
Implementing the 6th Cycle Housing Element  
**Date:** Thursday, September 07, 2023 11:51:57 AM

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To the Planning Commission:

I understand the intent of Los Altos' current Housing Element (adopted 1/23, revised 8/23). I am, however, extremely concerned about forced housing development coming at the expense of its residents and the current business owners who support our community. I would like to comment on several of the items up for discussion at the 9/7/23 Planning Commission Meeting:

- **Program 3.B: Modify building height in mixed-use zoning districts.** I believe building height should be limited to 36 feet, and 3 stories. With current zoning in mixed-use zoning districts allowing no more than two stories, moving to 3 stories still increases the property's potential use by 50%. The proposed 40-45 feet limit (4 stories in some districts) is excessive.
- **Program 3.C: Remove floor-to-area ratio (FAR) restriction at Rancho Shopping Center and Woodland Plaza:**
  - Potential for redevelopment of the two main shopping/business centers along the Foothill Expressway and southern part of Los Altos should be staggered. If the FAR is removed simultaneously for both locations and developers come in with acceptable proposals, redevelopment could eliminate (at least temporarily) the full service grocery stores many Los Altos residents, commuters, and workers rely on each and every day. With possible concurrent redevelopment of the four corners at Mary and Fremont in Sunnyvale (Smart & Final and Zanotto's), and expressed interest in redeveloping Foothill Crossing Shopping Center (pg. 136, Housing Element), residents could have to travel for miles just to take care of basic shopping needs. This possibility flies in the face of a walkable/bikeable community.
  - The Housing Element lists the time frame for this action as December, 2024. I would like to suggest a more prudent approach of initially removing FAR on only one of these sites. There needs to be balance between meeting State mandates and serving the needs of the existing community. With interest already having been expressed to redevelop the Foothill Crossing Shopping Center, combined with elimination of building restrictions at Loyola Corners (unenforceable density cap through at least 2030; ref. pg 171 Housing Element, and proposed elimination of Section 14.80.060, item J of the Municipal Code), it seems The Rancho Shopping Center would be a more appropriate candidate to go first. Otherwise, the current approach appears poised to make the residential areas of South Los Altos/Grant Park take the brunt of much of the development outside the downtown and El Camino corridor areas (i.e., Lucky's and surrounding areas, Loyola Corners, Foothill Crossing).
- **Program 3.G: Amend Conditional Use Permits findings applicable to housing Developments: Re: 14.80.060, Item G:** Large Family Daycares should continue to be required to obtain Conditional Use Permits. Large family daycares (up to 14 children) are large business enterprises. Within quiet residential areas, they can have serious adverse impacts to the surrounding residents related to noise, traffic, privacy, visual

impact, property value, etc. A large family day care is essentially a busy, noisy business, and should therefore not be allowed without a neighborhood impact report or, at a minimum, notice to surrounding neighbors and ability for them to weigh in on approval of the family day care.

- **Program 3.N: Modify standards in the R3 zoning district:** The stated plan is to "increase allowed site coverage in all R3 zoning districts to ensure maximum densities can be achieved". Though this comment pertains to program 3.N, it carries well beyond this. The Housing Element seems designed to cram as many residences as possible into a given space with little regard for existing residents. Let's also not forget we are stewards of our environment. Green space (and by this I do not mean artificial turf), plants, trees, etc., are needed not only for our mental well being, but also to support nature and clean the air. All development should balance meeting a variety of housing needs while providing a good quality of life for current and future residents and visitors, as well as create a hospitable business environment.

Regards,  
Cheryl Reicker  
Los Altos resident since 1996