

From: [Rebecca Eisenberg](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Alternative M!
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 7:39:43 PM
Attachments: [ALTERNATIVE M \(1\).pdf](#)

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The most important parts of this are the alternative funding sources!

PLEASE CONSIDER THIS!

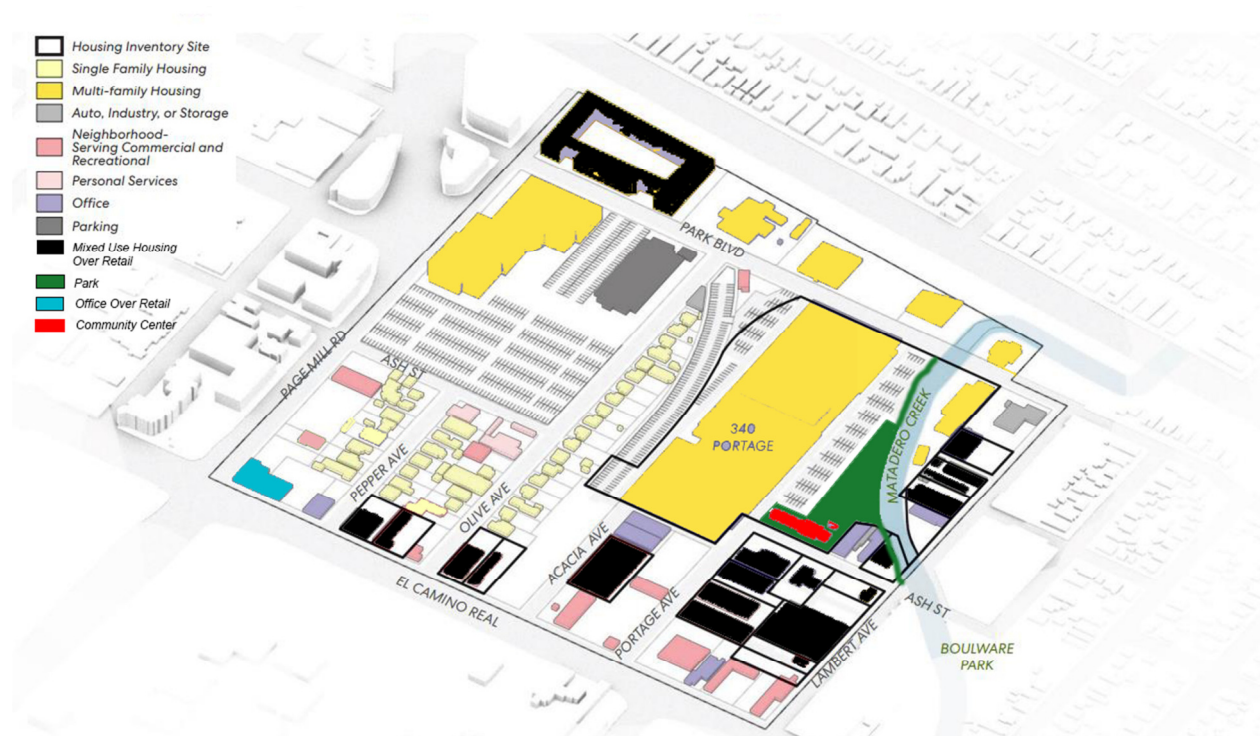
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ALTERNATIVE M

Focused on Community Needs

- Welcomes teachers, seniors, people with disabilities, first responders, city workers, and other community members with approximately 400 below market rate housing units
- Provides up to approximately 770 other housing units through office phase-out and focused zoning
- Reduces peak hour traffic
- Improves job/housing imbalance
- Offers more space for community-serving retail, local services, and health providers
- Creates new community center and parkland
- Reduces cut-through traffic
- Beautifies streets
- Preserves all existing residences with no displacement of owners and tenants
- Fully parks all new buildings to prevent impacting neighbors and streets
- Preserves historic Fry's site building via adaptive reuse
- Widens bike lanes on Park by eliminating street spaces for parked cars
- Does not rely on developer incentives to provide key benefits
- Treats Ventura the same as other Palo Alto neighborhoods by not increasing allowed density



This alternative comes from NVCAP Working Group Members Keith Reckdahl and Terry Holzemer and Ventura Neighborhood Association Moderator Becky Sanders, with consultation from others experienced in affordable housing and local zoning.

Adaptive Reuse of the Fry's Site

The site has been zoned for housing since the 1980s but the City Council granted it a special exemption for office and retail use so as to support Fry's Electronics. The owner, Sobrato Organization, has said housing wouldn't be profitable for it and wants to keep the present office uses. However, the office tenants are high-tech firms not serving the local community.

With Fry's now gone, we think it's time the site became housing, just as the city's zoning and housing inventory intended. Rather than providing incentives for the developer that inevitably increase traffic and density, we propose the City purchase the site and convert both the major building and the newer office building at 3250 Park Boulevard to below market rate housing. The wooden office building at 3201-3205 Ash will become a community center. Converting the major buildings from office to housing reduces parking requirements, enabling about three acres of new publically-owned parkland per our estimates.

Adaptive reuse of buildings is environmentally-desirable and enables the historic preservation of two buildings constructed by Chinese-American immigrant entrepreneur Thomas Foon Chew (pictured below), who created the third-largest fruit and vegetable canning company in the world in the early 1900s. Our city's Historic Resources Board determined that the buildings need to be preserved after an extensive historic review by an expert firm. Reuse of historic sites is common in cities other than Palo Alto, with architects creating wonderful modern interiors filled with light and open space.



Why Below Market Rate Housing?

It's by far our greatest housing need. Virtually all of Palo Alto's unmet RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Allocation) 2015-2023 goal is for low-income housing, with about 2/3 being for people earning 80% or less of the Santa Clara County median income. For-profit housing projects create very few, if any, below market rate units and will never provide enough directly or through in-lieu fees to meet our RHNA goals. Rather than falling further behind, we propose to prioritize below market rate housing to serve teachers, seniors, people with disabilities, first responders, city workers, and other community members who are being priced out of Palo Alto.

How Do We Pay for the Site?

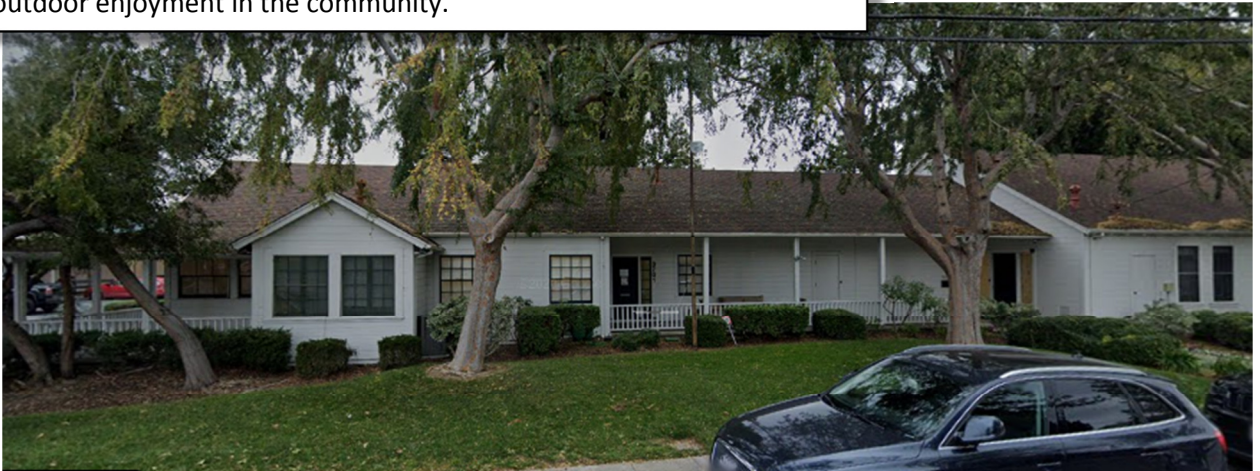
As is common for cities, Palo Alto can offer 30-year municipal bonds to finance the purchase of the Fry's site. Interest rates on such bonds are very low. Bond payments will then be covered partially by tenant rents and a portion of the revenue from the business tax revenue favored by many in the community and likely to return once the economy recovers. This will create no financial burden on Palo Alto residents nor on City finances.

A New Community Center and Parkland

Because the City will own the Fry's site, the historic building at 3201-3205 Ash (see below) that's part of the site can become a wonderful new community center. We envision the center housing a non-profit operating a small eatery, similar to Ada's Cafe, where residents of all ages will find comfortable and friendly service.

The center can also house community meetings, a historic display about the Fry's site and Thomas Foon Chew, and social events.

Adjacent to the community center can be new parkland, enabling indoor-outdoor events. The new parkland could also connect up with Boulware Park and its recent expansion to form a wonderful area for outdoor enjoyment in the community.



Safer Bike Travel on Park Boulevard

Commercial buildings on Park Boulevard are supposed to provide parking for all workers and visitors, yet cars are parking on the street. We should prevent on-street parking in bike lanes to improve the safety of one of our city's busiest bike routes.

Zone for the Community, Not High-Tech Offices

Over the years in Ventura, the City has allowed high-tech firms to replace local retail and community-serving offices such as health providers. These firms increase peak-hour traffic, price out local businesses, and mean we must go further to shop, dine, and get professional services.

We propose to end this trend by converting the zoning along El Camino and other streets in Ventura to allow only housing and true local-serving businesses. This will benefit residents, open up new housing opportunities, and benefit many local firms priced out of our community. It encourages walking and biking and helps convert North Ventura from an office park back into a neighborhood.

Without any increase to allowed density, we estimate this can add 349 to 431 housing units to the community with full parking.

We also envision converting office buildings along Park to housing through creative reuse. We estimate this can add 238 to 340 additional housing units. Sufficient parking already exists on these sites

As noted, all new housing will be fully parked. Much of Ventura suffers already from overcrowded streets. Underparked new housing will only create more problems so we have avoided it.

Beautify, Don't Densify

Building office and housing towers in Ventura will create an enormous burden on one small neighborhood. We believe that no upzoning (increased density) is needed whatsoever to achieve significant community and environmental benefits.

We envision new street trees providing shade and cooling, a beautiful community center on the historic Fry's site, new parkland, new local shopping and services, and housing for people of all incomes.



July 27, 2020

Dear NVCAP Working Group,

The significance and preservation of the Mayfield/Palo Alto Cannery site, originally built and operated by Thomas Foon Chew, is something critically important to California history.

Thomas Foon Chew was a Chinese-American who immigrated as a child to California with his father, Sai Yen Chew, during the time of the Chinese Exclusion Acts. When the 1906 earthquake destroyed their small cannery in San Francisco, the family moved to Alivso to establish Bay Side Cannery, which grew to become the third-largest canning business in the United States, after Libby and Del Monte. Bay Side eventually expanded to Isleton, on the Sacramento River, to Monterey, and to Mayfield—now Palo Alto—where the old cannery building still stands in what became, many years later, Fry's Electronics.

Thomas Foon, as he was known, was a extremely remarkable man. He employed and made friends with all races and creeds and became the first Chinese man in California to join the Masons. When he died in 1931, at the age of just 42, his death made headlines in the San Jose Mercury Herald and 25,000 people came out to honor his funeral cortege along Grant Avenue in San Francisco.

It is vital that you do all you can to preserve this important cannery site and the memory of Thomas Foon Chew in Palo Alto. Thomas was exactly what America needs today—an immigrant hero who worked to make the promise of the United States come true in his life, in spite of the tremendous obstacles he faced every day.

In my book *Historic Bay Area Visionaries*, published in 2018, I outlined the significance of Thomas' life and his impact on the Santa Clara Valley region. With the help of his granddaughter, Dr. Gloria Hom, we think it is important to our region and our country to not only remember this inclusive, brilliant, and hard-working man, but also preserve one of the last original cannery sites remaining in California.

Very truly yours,

Ms. Robin Chapman
Local Historian/Author
911 Echo Drive
Los Altos, CA 94024

July 27, 2020

Dear NVCAP Working Group Members,

In regards to Question #24, I am writing to you in support of Option A – retaining and adapting the reuse of all the existing buildings at 340 Portage.

It's critically important to recognize that these buildings are not just another series of old industrial structures that are now unneeded and torn down. In fact, these buildings have played a major significant role in not only Palo Alto history, but to California's and our country's as well.

Largely forgotten by current residents, Santa Clara Valley (known as "Silicon Valley" today) was once called the nation's "Valley of Heart's Delight". Long before there were silicon chips, the valley was known as one of the most important fruit growing areas in our nation. The land that now contains our largest corporations, Google, Apple, was once the best and most fertile area for growing fruits and vegetables in California.

As part of that important past is the Bayside Cannery, which became the 3rd largest cannery company in the world and built a fruit cannery operation (340 Portage) in Palo Alto/Mayfield in the early 1900's. Established by my grandfather, Thomas Foon Chew, the Mayfield cannery focused on canning fruits, particularly apricots, peaches and tomatoes. In addition, even after his early death in 1931, the cannery continued to be a major supplier of canned foods to the U.S. military during World War II. Several millions of cans of fruits and vegetables were canned produced at the Mayfield facility for our service people and nation during that time.

I encourage you as the NVCAP Working Group to recognize the significant of these buildings in our own backyard and how they could be adaptively reused to serve future generations to come. These structures tell an important story that all future California and Palo Alto generations can benefit from. I support the efforts to retain and reuse the 340 Portage buildings as part of our history.

Sincerely,

Gloria Hom

Granddaughter of Thomas Foon Chew

Towle Way, Palo Alto, CA 94306



BAYSIDE CANNING CO.

Hope St

Street





KEEP
OUT





From: [Elan Music](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 6:26:53 PM

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Dear Chair Templeton and PTC members,

I'm a teacher here in Palo Alto.

I'm writing to ask you to explore and expand Alternative 3. The North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan consists of 60 acres next to Caltrain and California Avenue's business district. This is an ideal location for a bike and pedestrian-friendly, multi-use neighborhood with housing at all income levels. But the current options constrain the future of Palo Alto by limiting the number of homes, heights, and density. Unless we build taller and more compact in locations like this one, we'll continue to see sprawling communities reliant on single occupancy vehicles. If Palo Alto wants to meet their climate change goals it must expand Alternative 3 to include more homes.

Sincerely,

From: [Liz Gardner](#)
To: [North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan](#)
Subject: NVCP - Fry's Site
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 3:44:37 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear NVCP,

RE: NVCP – Fry's Site

Equity and inclusivity of all residents and non, regardless of income, race, gender of marital status or family size IS a Palo Alto for all. I am urging that the housing element be revised to a substantial increase for more affordable family housing.

The Fry's site and its acreage will provide Palo Alto with enough units and floor plans that accommodate all income levels, growing families, comfortably and efficiently. Please seriously consider this plan submission. Also please reconsider the inclusionary zoning red lining which forces low wage, working families in to housing in dangerous, noisy, high automobile traffic areas.

I urge you. Please. Do not miss this extraordinary rare opportunity between Portage Way and Park Blvd. This is a once in a Century chance for Palo Alto to 'catch' up to its housing deficit. As well, I ask that the city form a housing and labor commission to help usher in approval of ample supply of equitable and sustainable housing to meet the need of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Such an opportunity as Fry's will not come again.

The choices in current affordable are bleak at best in Palo Alto. Last week an apartment complex of almost 200 units was approved for San Antonio Road. This approval contained a scant 16 low-income set aside for lucky, lottery winner renters. Though the other apartments are slated to become renter owned in the future, the chance for its 16 set-aside BMR rentals have to purchase a "condo" down the road, unlike their neighbors has been omitted the plan.

Sobrato submitted to the City Planner, J. Laithe a plan for 85 luxury town-homes at the former Fry's site. With only 13 units at 120% AMI set-asides! This is unacceptable. The Palo Alto Transportation and Planning Commission along with the City Council has for the past four years, shirked its responsibility to the City's essential, teacher, fire-fire fighters, families, elders and individuals at the 60-30% AMI. The Fry's site is right time and ripe for working class homes. Yet our city leaders have approved over and again, high wage luxury and micro units at the former VTA park and ride, former Olive Garden on ECR, former sports store on ECR, and on Page Mill at Oregon where three very moderate houses once stood. I am sure once forever homes to families back in the day.

The City of Palo Alto has neglected its housing quota for half a Century. In the last four years it's approved one, yes 1! Affordable, 58unit complex Wilton Court. This with their 501(c)3 partner. It really does appear that though Palo Alto relies on a low-to moderate wage work force to keep the rich, rich and the Tech Giant economy booming, they do not wish to have these workers live in this zip code.

As a low-income, Head of Household with two growing school-age children, we live in tiny rental space on El Camino Real. It's lacking room to safely work, learn, grow. We lack the space to celebrate birthdays/ host family gatherings / honor holidays / or practice traditions. Sadly, I often feel like a temporary resident, a charity case to my neighbors who own homes and have plenty of space to grow with variety of personal or professional interests. I was born and raised in the Bay Area, I contribute to taxes, volunteer for my community and give to PIE. It is scant to none that I will ever be a homeowner.

45% of Palo Altans are current renters. At this 21st Century emergency moment unemployment numbers and local small biz are tanking fast. Even during a Pandemic, home prices still rise -- in sales and in rent costs. A substandard 55-year-old, 800 square small 2Bdrm, 1bath outdated rental apartment on Alma is \$3000 per month. \$15 an hour is not enough to this pay rent. A head of household would need to earn \$50 an hour to make this above market rent, with little margin for food, clothing, transportation. And still the Pandemic rages on. Working from home or moving for many now unemployed is another

entitled PA luxury.

Many renters are stacked 3 people deep squeezed in to tiny apartments. Some residences are forced to sublet their living room floor space, couches, garages, driveways to gig or hourly day workers. All to make up for massive rents. This is out of whack. Period. And we wonder why crime is on the rise. A substandard family dwelling who advertise new kitchen linoleum or having a ceiling fan as a bonus is a justification for a higher rent. How is this an equitable?

For some long-time residents inherited wealth and property has come to them from family. These too are the Baby Boomers who quickly cry foul over affordable housing construction, traffic and open space. Is seeing a highly visible BLM sign in a yard just more hypocritical sloganeering? In reality, as a low-income, working mom, I am worn down hearing, "if you can't afford it, move!"

City leaders must hold themselves accountable for the outrageous rent increases. Many of these properties lack basic amenities and often include HOA's fees and legally bound leases, with owners free to raise rents hundreds of dollars, anytime. Finally, high rents here exclude federally backed rental assistance payments for substandard 60 years old multi-family dwellings. Designating the Fry's site for housing would loosen the tension that is so taught right now with the City in a housing hole.

It's also an imperative for the city to address the lack of housing based on the climate crisis, not just plan for sea level rise. Which the Fry's site will help, tremendously.

The Post War economy enticed families to come here, purchase homes with renewed investments in Stanford, a growing technological innovations and accompanying economies. That Mid-Century economy and wages no longer exists.

With 1979's Prop 13 Palo Alto's affordable housing production all but evaporated and thus fair market living standards. Commercial builds have quadrupled, many remain empty. The human population too has quadrupled

since the mid to late 20th Century.

Please create a housing and labor commission. Please start working on the real needs of our residents by taking responsibility for the lack of a true and livable resident / job quotient. The Fry's site is a perfect area for addressing live work "abnormal" imbalance.

Sincerely,

Liz Gardner
2500 El Camino Real #301
Palo Alto, CA 94306
650-845-7502

From: [Elizabeth Ratner](#)
To: [North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan](#)
Subject: NVCAP Alternative
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 3:18:05 PM

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Dear Commissioners:

I am in favor of studying Alternative 3 in the proposed area plan for North Ventura. The location--between Cal Ave and Cal Train--is our city's largest transit-friendly site. Planning for a meaningful amount of housing for all income levels here makes sense. Our city's housing allocation from the state will be between 8,000-10,000 units over the eight years between 2023-2031, but to date the city has only met a small percentage of its current allocation. Housing at the scale envisioned in Alternative 3 will enable our city to plan for a walkable neighborhood with homes near services, shopping, and transit.

Alternative 3 will help the city meet the climate change and equity goals of housing element law (SB 828) by planning to put housing where jobs are, reducing the greenhouse-gas emissions caused by current long commutes to our job center area, and helping to enable the return of low and moderate-income households to Palo Alto. A majority of the people surveyed who live in or near the North Ventura neighborhood preferred Alternative Three.

The city is legally obligated to undertake all reasonable actions to encourage and promote housing to accommodate our regional housing need. Alternative 3 would help establish that we have done so.

Lisa Ratner
Palo Alto

From: [Gina Dalma](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#); [North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan](#)
Subject: Palo Alto must fully explore and expand Alternative 3 to meet our housing needs and huge historical deficit
Date: Sunday, December 13, 2020 5:38:38 PM

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Dear Planning Commission,

As a proud Palo Alto I would love to ask you to ensure a bold housing plan for the NVCAP to meet our housing goals. I want to make sure there is a place for my children to live, as they come back from college. For us to continue to live in a community with our families - not expel my unaffordable housing options. This is a perfect place to build new housing at all income levels near transit and small businesses.

[Palo Alto must fully explore and expand Alternative 3 to meet our housing needs and huge historical deficit](#)

Thank you!

--

Gina D. Dalma

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l: www.linkedin.com/pub/gina-dalma/0/53/b47/en

From: [Jeffrey Lu](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#); [North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan](#)
Subject: explore alternative 3 for NVCAP
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 4:01:03 PM

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Planning and Transportation Commission Members,

I hope you and your families are doing sufficiently well during this trying year.

I am writing to voice my excitement for the broad goals outlined in the NVCAP Alternatives report. I am encouraged by the sharp focus on housing (including below market rate units), de-emphasis of office jobs, and proposals for expanded open space. The mention of woonerfs, protected intersections, and protected lanes to this neighborhood are especially welcome and overdue.

I urge you to explore and pursue Alternative 3, which best addresses our critical housing shortage and takes steps to establish a built environment designed to maximize non-vehicular mobility (especially important given that passenger cars are our primary source of emissions in Palo Alto). A lot of folks in Palo Alto have been looking for comfortable streets on which to take walks or get around by bike during COVID without fear of speeding cars, and North Ventura would be a wonderful place to establish this as the standard.

I'm excited for this rare opportunity to boldly address our housing and transportation needs, and look forward to your support.

Thanks,

--
Jeffrey Lu
Midtown

From: [Adina Levin](#)
To: [North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan](#)
Subject: NVCAP - housing near Caltrain
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 3:06:12 PM

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Dear PTC members,

Thankfully, Measure RR was approved by the voters in November, which will provide funding for Caltrain's plans to improve service in the future, including in underserved stations such as California Avenue; to improve service hours so that people can use the train for more kinds of trips in times including mid-day, evenings and weekends, and and to improve connectivity and equitable access so more people can use the train to travel.

The upcoming transit improvements provide support for the consideration of housing options for the NVCAP that enable more people across the income spectrum to live near transit, jobs and services.

Please continue to explore options including fleshing out Alternative 3 to address the city's housing needs in a way that enables more people to take advantage of improved public transportation.

Thank you for your consideration,

- Adina

Adina Levin

Friends of Caltrain

<https://greencaltrain.com>

650-646-4344

From: [Angie Evans](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Council, City; North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan](#)
Subject: December 9th Public Hearing on NVCAP
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 2:22:05 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Chair Templeton and Planning and Transportation Commission members,

I'm writing tonight to support exploring and expanding Alternative 3. As you know, when this planning started, community members were concerned about traffic and the lack of affordable housing. Since then, we've seen homelessness grow city and county wide, we've watched as young families and renters have left, and we've started to explore how our policies promote and reinforce racism. If we don't start to operationalize land use policies that make Palo Alto's housing more diverse and equitable, the state will. Palo Alto's RHNA goals will be between 8 and 10 thousand, even in the unlikely case that we win an appeal. Please demonstrate our willingness to do the right thing by exploring and expanding Alternative 3. Without the height and density changes required by this alternative, affordability will not be prioritized.

This week, Palo Alto Forward released a video with residents talking about housing needs. I hope you'll take a moment to watch it: <https://youtu.be/dozSel-FOQQ> I am specifically including this video because this process has failed to include young, diverse voices. Until every board and commission prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion we will not have representative policies or governing.

Best,
Angie Evans
Crescent Park Mom