

## Planning and Transportation Public Comment 3-14-18

**From:** [Nadia Naik](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable Housing (AH) Combining District Draft Ordinance  
**Date:** Thursday, March 15, 2018 10:51:50 AM

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Dear Planning & Transportation Commissioners:

Please accept the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee as put forth in the last two pages of the staff report.

While supporting the development at Wilton Court, our community needs more time to review the proposed Affordable Housing Combining District and to weigh other options for achieving its lofty goals.

Thank you.

Nadia Naik  
Resident of Old Palo Alto

**From:** [J Perry](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** proposed new Affordable Housing Combining District  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 5:25:19 PM

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Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing to express concern re: the proposed new Affordable Housing Combining District. Although I am an advocate for developing ways to accommodate more reasonable rates for livable housing in Palo Alto, citizens such as myself would like a chance to explore some of our concerns and seek answers to our questions before so major a change is locked into law. Do we want an El Camino Real that looks like Redwood City or Mountain View? Are we ready to absorb all the impacts that go along with the “canyonization effect” of 50 foot buildings up and down El Camino – aesthetics, traffic, congestion, parking, pollution. What is the plan for eventual increase in school age population? Will these new affordable housing units actually be affordable to local teachers, firefighters and community-based support workers?

We are **ONLY** asking for time to review this and get more public input.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jeanne Perry

## Planning and Transportation Public Comment 3-14-18

**From:** [Beth Rosenthal](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Ad Hoc Committee recommendations  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 5:46:10 PM

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Dear Planning and Transportation Commissioners:

Please accept the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee as put forth in the last two pages of the staff report. While supporting the development at Wilton Court, our community needs more time to review the proposed Affordable Housing Combining District and to weigh other options for achieving its lofty goals.

Thank you.

Beth Rosenthal, Ph.D.  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Larry & Francine Geller](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#); [Larry Francine Geller](#); [Francine Geller](#)  
**Subject:** Wilton Court Project  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 6:40:09 PM

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Hi Planning commission,

We own a home at 425 Wilton ave.

We are very concerned about the proposed project.  
Can you please help us understand the next steps in the approval process?

Has a full traffic analysis of the project been done?

1. Parking

We already have congested street parking due to crowded businesses nearby, especially during the weekends, lunch and dinner time.

2. Traffic safety

Many families with young kids have moved into this neighborhood. I have witnessed many accidents and near accidents recently. For instance, a teenage bicyclist was hit by a car at El Camino and Ventura yesterday.

3. Kids friendly retail business

Due to the increase number of young kids, we are very concerned what type of retail business will be added to the housing.

Thank you  
Larry and Francine Geller

**From:** [Pnr21](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable housing zone  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 6:48:32 PM

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Dear Planning and Transportation Commission members,

I support building more truly affordable housing. I do think that creating an Affordable Housing overlay zone based on the specifications of one potential project, however meritorious that project may be, is a bad planning practice. The fact that the Daily Post reported on March 9, 2018 (page 3) that there are other potential sites that Palo Alto Housing has identified that may qualify for this proposed zoning indicates that a broader analysis of the merits and impacts of the proposed overlay zone should be considered in the context of the other sites that may be affected.

I agree with the proposal of the *ad hoc* committee and recommend adoption of the *ad hoc* committee's recommendations.

Sincerely,

Peter Rosenthal  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [donwood49@gmail.com](mailto:donwood49@gmail.com) on behalf of [Don Wood](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Wilton Court Development  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 7:39:46 PM

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To the Planning Commission Members,

I find it difficult to oppose higher density development close to good transit routes but I do believe those developments must mitigate community impacts as part of that development. The Wilton Court development does not even attempt to do this. The dream that .3 to .5 parking spaces per unit/bed will eliminate neighborhood parking impact is absurd. There are, at most, a total of only 6 potential street parking spaces fronting on Wilton and ECR. Each unit will most likely add two vehicles to the neighborhood, a neighborhood already far too impacted by the existing commercial development on ECR that provides little to no onsite parking. This development, and all others along such corridors, must completely address the parking needs created by the development. To that end, the development must provide a more realistic amount of parking spaces actually needed. If these units are expected to not add more than .3 to .5 cars per unit, there must be enforcement to assure that limit is met by rental restrictions and enforcement. In any case parking impact to the neighborhood must be mitigated by implementing a residential parking permit zone, at no cost to the existing residents, which excludes residents of the new development or limits permits for the residents of the development to match the total of the six street parking spaces fronting the development. Further, unlike the present parking enforcement, parking restrictions must be promptly enforced including immediate towing for unsafe parking like in front of fire hydrants and across driveways and crosswalks. Currently, the police try everything to avoid enforcing the parking requirements that already exist.

And a final concern is that the pedestrian path along the front of the development must be maintained throughout the construction period with only absolutely necessary momentary closures.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter,

Don Wood  
■ Wilton Avenue

## Planning and Transportation Public Comment 3-14-18

**From:** [CeCi Kettendorf](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable Housing Combining District  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 3:50:27 PM

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Dear Planning & Transportation Commissioners:

Please **accept the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee** as put forth in the last two pages of the staff report and devote more time for staff and public review; the changes as proposed now will make irrevocable changes, not for the better.

This development as proposed will impact all of south Palo Alto.

The Ventura neighborhood will be changed forever; please move slowly and give careful consideration to the far reaching ramifications of this development.

Thank you.

Connie Kettendorf  
Luke Brennan

**From:** [Adriana Anca Suvaiala](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable Housing regulations  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 5:15:18 PM

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Dear City Commissioners and City Councilors,

I believe Affordable Housing is important for our community, and our generation has an obligation to try to pay forward the opportunities that were afforded to us.

Please do not make building Affordable Housing even harder than it already is and do not give priority to cars and parking lots over people.

Looking forward to your contribution in building more affordable housing.

Sincerely,  
Adriana Suvaiala



**From:** [John Guislin](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable Housing  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 4:17:13 PM

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Planning and Transportation Commissioners:

I support building more housing that is truly affordable but I oppose creating an Affordable Housing overlay zone based on one project, however good that project looks. This is clearly a bad precedent to set. It could negatively impact other areas in Palo Alto and limit our ability to address local conditions.

I agree with the proposal of the *ad hoc* committee and support the adoption of the *ad hoc* committee's recommendations.

Sincerely,

John Guislin  
Crescent Park  
Palo Alto

**From:** [Cervantes, Yolanda](#)  
**To:** [Cervantes, Yolanda](#)  
**Cc:** [Owen, Graham](#); [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** FW: 150" Rule  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 4:17:55 PM  
**Attachments:** [150FootRuleDraft4.pptx](#)

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Forwarding on behalf of Commissioner Summa.

Yolanda M. Cervantes  
Planning & Community Environment  
City of Palo Alto  
[Yolanda.cervantes@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Yolanda.cervantes@cityofpaloalto.org)  
650.329.2404

**From:** doria s [<mailto:doriasumma@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 11:24 AM  
**To:** Lait, Jonathan; Cervantes, Yolanda  
**Subject:** 150' Rule

Dear Jonathan and Yolanda,


This is how I thought the city was interpreting the citywide "transition height requirement".

I understand this issue not on the agenda tonight but could you please forward to my colleagues on the PTC.

Very best regards,  
Doria

--

Doria Summa

  
(650) 867 7544 Mobile

# 150-Foot Rule

The 150-foot rule applies to all commercial zones:

CN, CC, CS in Chapter 18.16

CD in Chapter 18.18

MOR, ROLM, RP, and GM in Chapter 18.20

It limits heights near most residential parcels

# Chapter 18.16

## CN, CC, and CS Districts

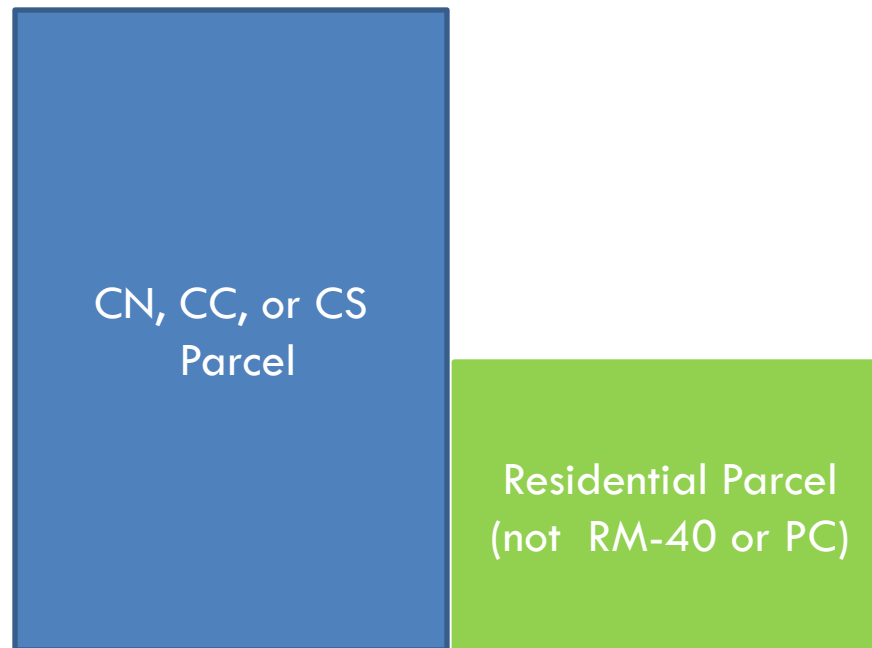
From 18.16.060 Development Standards (a) Exclusively Non-Residential Uses

Table 3  
Exclusively Non-residential Development Standards

	CN	CC	CC(2)	CS	Subject to regulations in Section
Corner lots, from side lot line on the alley	Not applicable		None	applicable	
All lots other than corner lots			20'		
<b>Maximum Site Coverage</b>	50%	None Required			
<b>Maximum Height (ft)</b>					
Standard		50'	37' <sup>(4)</sup>	50'	
Within 150 ft. of a residential district (other than an RM-40 or PC zone) abutting or located within 50 feet of the site	25' and 2 stories	35'	35'	35'	
<b>Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b>	0.4:1		2.0:1	0.4:1	18.18.060(e)
<b>Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for Hotels</b>	N/A	- (5)	2.0:1	2.0:1	18.18.060(d)

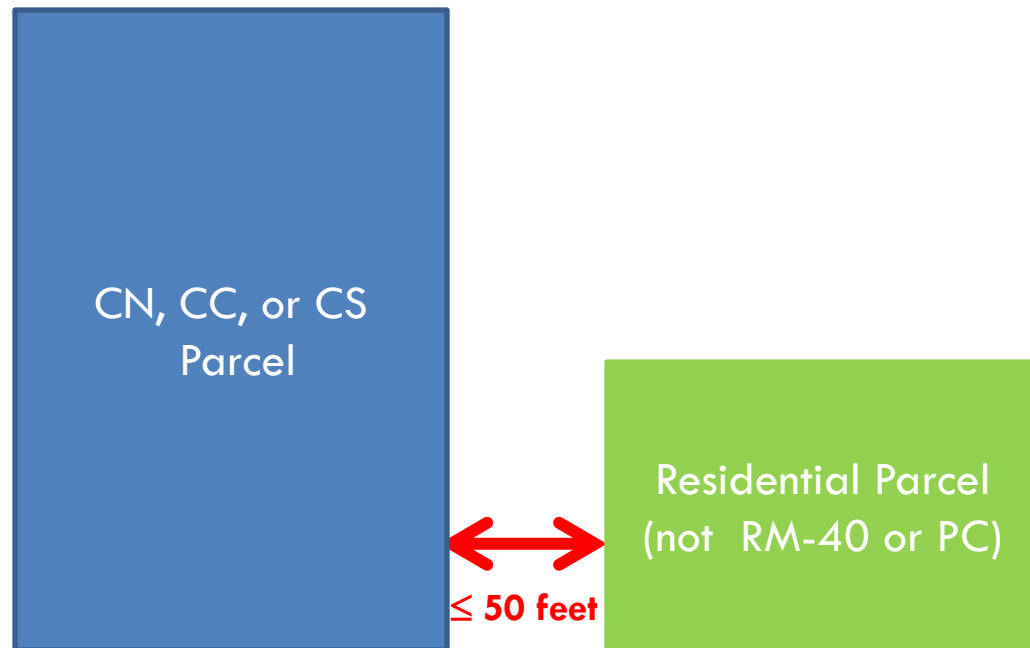
# How the Rule Works

“Within 150 ft. of  
a residential zone district (other than an RM-40 or PC zone)  
abutting  
or located within 50 feet of the side”



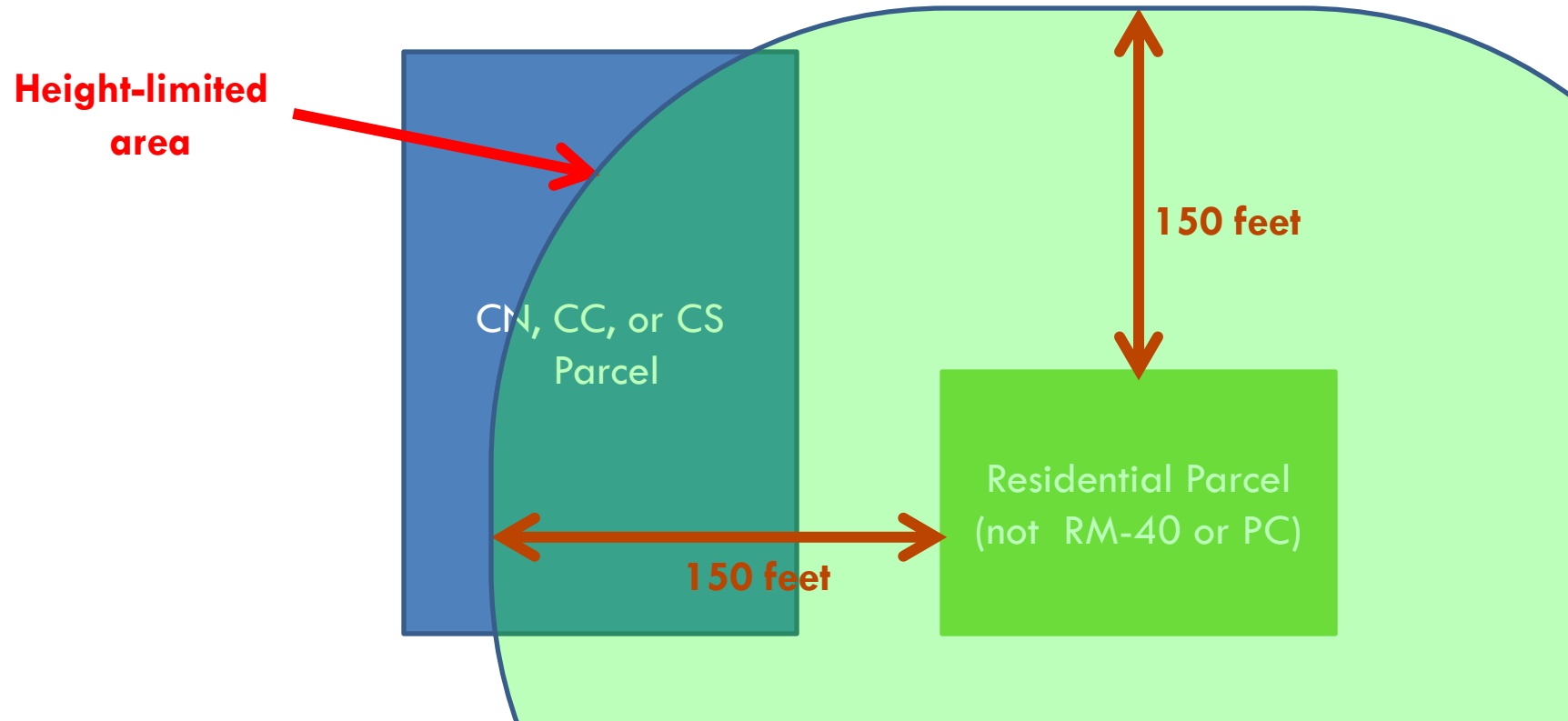
# How the Rule Works

“Within 150 ft. of  
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# How the Rule Works

“**Within 150 ft. of**  
a residential zone district (other than an RM-40 or PC zone)  
abutting  
or located within 50 feet of the side”



# Chapter 18.16

## CN, CC, and CS Districts

From 18.16.060 Development Standards (b) Mixed Uses

Table 4  
Mixed Use Development Standards

					in:
<b>Usable Open Space</b>	20 sq ft per unit for 5 or fewer units <sup>(2)</sup> , 150 sq ft per unit for 6 units or more <sup>(2)</sup>				
<b>Maximum Height (ft)</b>					
Standard	35' <sup>(4)</sup>	50'	37'	50'	
Within 150 ft. of a residential zone district (other than an RM-40 or PC zone) abutting or located within 50 feet of the side	35'	35' <sup>(5)</sup>	35' <sup>(5)</sup>	35' <sup>(5)</sup>	
Daylight Plane for lot lines abutting	Daylight plane height and slope shall be identical to				

(5) For sites abutting an RM-40 zoned residential district or a residential Planned Community (PC) district, maximum height may be increased to 50 feet.



# Chapter 18.18

## CD Districts

From 18.18.060 Development Standards (a) Exclusively Non-Residential Use

Table 2				
Exclusively Non-Residential Development Standards				
	CD-C	CD-S	CD-N	Subject to regulations in Section:
Maximum Height (ft)				
Standard	50	50	25	
Within 150 ft. of an abutting residential zone district	_(3)	_(3)	_(3)	

(3) The maximum height within 150 feet of any abutting residential zone district shall not exceed the height limit of the abutting residential district.

# Chapter 18.18

## CD Districts

From 18.18.060 Development Standards (b) Mixed Use

	CD-C	CD-S	CD-N	Subject to regulations in Section:
<b>Maximum Height (ft)</b>				
Standard	50'	50'	35'	
Within 150 ft. of an abutting residential zone	40 <sup>(4)</sup>	40 <sup>(4)</sup>	35 <sup>(4)</sup>	

(4) For sites abutting an RM-40 zoned residential district or a residential Planned Community (PC) district, maximum height may be increased to 50 feet.

# Chapter 18.20

## MOR, ROLM, RP and GM Districts

From 18.20.040 Site Development Standards (a) Non-Residential Uses

**TABLE 2  
INDUSTRIAL/MANUFACTURING NON-RESIDENTIAL SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

	MOR	ROLM	ROLM(E)	RP	RP(5)	GM	Subject to Regulations in Chapter:
<b>Maximum Height (ft)</b>							
Standard	50	35 <sup>(4)</sup>		35 <sup>(4)</sup>		50	
Within 150 ft. of a residential zone <sup>&lt;5)</sup>	35	35		35		35	
Within 40 ft. of a residential zone <sup>(5)</sup>	35	25		25		35	
<b>Daylight Plane for site lines</b>							

(5) Residential zones include R-1, R-2, RE, RMD, RM-15, RM-30, RM-40 and residential Planned Community (PC) zones.

# Chapter 18.20

## MOR, ROLM, RP and GM Districts

From 18.20.040 Site Development Standards

(e) (2) The maximum height in the RP and RP(5) zoning districts may be increased to forty (40) feet where a) interstitial space is provided between floors to accommodate mechanical and/or electrical equipment, b) the load for such interstitial space is limited, to the satisfaction of the Building Official, to preclude conversion to habitable space, c) the building contains no more than two stories of habitable space above grade, and d) the portion of any building over 35 feet in height is located a minimum of 150 feet from the nearest property line of a residential zone or residential PC zone.

# Recent Example

## 3001 El Camino (“Mike’s Bikes”)

ATTACHMENT C  
ZONING COMPARISON TABLE  
3001 El Camino Real, 16PLN-00097

<b>Table 1: COMPARISON WITH CHAPTER 18.16 (CS DISTRICT)</b> Mixed-Use Development Standards			
<b>Regulation</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Max. Building Height	50 ft or 35 ft within 150 ft. of a residential district (other than an RM-40 or PC zone) abutting or located within 50 feet of the site	Two buildings 14 feet and 18 feet in height	50 feet; steps down to 35'

From 3001 El Camino Real City Council Staff Report  
Staff Report #8257, October 23, 2017, page 45

# Recent Example

## 3001 El Camino (“Mike’s Bikes”)

#### 4. Low Density Residential Transitions

*Where new projects are built abutting existing lower scale residential development, care shall be taken to respect the scale and privacy of neighboring properties.*

The proposed buildings are both set back substantially further than required from the property lines and the project is consistent with height requirements within the 150 foot radius of single-family residential uses.

**From:** [Cervantes, Yolanda](#)  
**To:** [Cervantes, Yolanda](#)  
**Cc:** [Lait, Jonathan](#); [Owen, Graham](#); [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Mercury News Article re: AH Overlay  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 4:18:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [phone.png](#)  
[email.png](#)

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Forwarding on behalf of Vice Chair Monk.

BCCPTC

Yolanda M. Cervantes  
Planning & Community Environment  
City of Palo Alto  
[Yolanda.cervantes@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Yolanda.cervantes@cityofpaloalto.org)  
650.329.2404

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**From:** Susan Monk [<mailto:susankmonk@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 3:49 PM  
**To:** Cervantes, Yolanda  
**Subject:** Fwd: Mercury News Article re: AH Overlay

Hi Yolanda,  
Could you please pass along the below email to PTC?

Best,  
Sue



Susan K. Monk, JD

 [619.804.4141](tel:619.804.4141)

 [susankmonk@gmail.com](mailto:susankmonk@gmail.com)

**Let's Connect!**



Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Candice Gonzalez <[cgonzalez@pah.community](mailto:cgonzalez@pah.community)>  
**Date:** March 13, 2018 at 9:12:07 AM PDT  
**To:** Susan Monk <[susankmonk@gmail.com](mailto:susankmonk@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Mercury News Article re: AH Overlay

Hi Susan,

Please share my email with the P&TC in advance of tomorrow night's meeting.

Just wondering if you saw the recent article in the Mercury News:

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/03/08/palo-alto-housing-initiative-could-usher-in-below-market-units/>

It mentions PAH owning at least 10 sites that could be redeveloped as affordable housing under the Affordable Housing (AH) Overlay. I wanted to clarify this as it is not quite accurate. We do have several, small sites in the City that are underutilized (e.g., existing apartments with 6-12 units that are zoned multi-family like RM15). However, as drafted, the AH overlay applies to existing commercial zoning only and NOT multi-family zoned sites. Hence, these sites would not be able to utilize the AH overlay.

At this time, only our Wilton Court/El Camino site would potentially qualify for the AH overlay. But remember, to apply the AH overlay to any property basically entails a zone change which would still require a great deal of oversight.

Right now, our focus is on our Wilton Court project. If Wilton goes smoothly, we may consider looking at some of our other existing sites for redevelopment (although we would need a rezone so chances are low on these small sites), or we may consider purchasing other sites that are zoned commercial where the AH overlay can be used.

You can view our portfolio online at: <http://pah.community/find-housing/>.

Thank you!

**CANDICE GONZALEZ**, *President & CEO*

a: 725 Alma St., Palo Alto, CA 94301

p: 650.321.9709 f: 650.321.4341

e: [cgonzalez@pah.community](mailto:cgonzalez@pah.community)

w. [pah.community](http://pah.community)



**BUILDING STORIES THAT MATTER**



**From:** [ginadalma@gmail.com](mailto:ginadalma@gmail.com) on behalf of [Gina Dalma](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Please support affordable housing NOW in Palo Alto. NO more excuses. No more delays.  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 3:27:02 PM

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Our state's housing crisis continues to deepen. The National Association of Homebuilders/Wells Fargo Housing Opportunity Index shows that in the third quarter of 2017, 9 of the 10 least-affordable large housing markets in the country were in California, with metropolitan San Francisco ranking as the second-least affordable. And this data is not exclusive to urban centers - 8 of the 10 most unaffordable housing markets in areas with fewer than 500,000 residents are also in California.

These prices are affecting not only our lower income households. According to the Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy (CCSCE), fifty per cent of community members in San Mateo and Santa Clara County are severely housing burdened – meaning they pay more than 50% of their income on housing expenses. The County's lowest-income residents are spending close to two-thirds (65 percent) of their monthly income on rent, with little money left to cover other expenses such as food, transportation and child care.

The future holds more of the same. The California Association of Realtors forecasts rising home prices this year. Median home prices are forecast to jump 4.2 percent to \$561,000 in 2018. Renters will not fare any better. According to the California Housing Partnership, San Mateo County renters currently need to earn \$9,503 per month, or 5.5 times the state minimum wage, to afford the average monthly rent of \$2,851.

It is time to support affordable housing and not put more roadblocks. Not put more delays. We need to understand the human toll the crisis is taking on our community and the future viability of our state. Our children are watching.

--

Gina D. Dalma  
e: [gina@dalma.org](mailto:gina@dalma.org)  
p: (980) 722.2660   
t: @ginadalma  
l: [www.linkedin.com/pub/gina-dalma/0/53/b47/en](http://www.linkedin.com/pub/gina-dalma/0/53/b47/en)

**From:** [Tirumala Ranganath](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable Housing Combining District  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 1:36:14 PM

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Dear Planning & Transportation Commissioners:

Please accept the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee as put forth in the last two pages of the staff report. While supporting the development at Wilton Court, our community needs more time to review the proposed Affordable Housing Combining District.

Thank you for your attention.

T.R. Ranganath  
(Extended Ventura Neighborhood)

**From:** [herb](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Owen, Graham](#); [Lait, Jonathan](#); [Council, City](#); [Clerk, City](#)  
**Subject:** March 14, 2018, P&TC Meeting, Item #2: Affordable Housing Combining District  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 2:00:16 PM

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Herb Borock  
P. O. Box 632  
Palo Alto, CA 94302

March 14, 2018

Planning and Transportation Commission  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94301

**MARCH 14, 2018, PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING  
AGENDA ITEM #2  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING (AH) COMBINING DISTRICT**

Dear Planning and Transportation Commission:

The original proposal for an Affordable Housing (AH) Combining District combined two different types of housing that should be kept separate when recommending and enacting legislation for housing.

One type of housing is deed-restricted housing that ensures that the units are available only to those at a given income level, and where the monthly rents are limited to a percentage of tenants incomes, usually 30% of household income.

The other type of housing is for-profit housing of a unit size and project size that will give developers a desired return on investment. This second type of housing is sometimes referred to by slogans such as "affordable" housing or "work force" housing, but is not housing that is affordable to households that have incomes at or below the county median income, and is housing that could be marketed to people who work in other communities when the housing is located on high transit corridors.

The 2017 Annual Housing Element Report for the Period of January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2017, was discussed in a Study Session by the City Council at its March 5, 2018 meeting.

The staff report for that agenda item (ID # 8694) at Page 10 of 35 at <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/63643> describes non-deed-restricted moderate units as being apartments for rent and ADUs/JADUs.

The State Income Limits for 2017 published by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for Santa Clara County are on Page 11 of 13 at <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/income-limits/state-and-federal-income-limits/docs/inc2k17.pdf>.

The 2017 Annual Housing Element Report omits the rental prices for the units described as "moderate income" in the Report.

Here are two examples of recent rental listings that can be compared to the HCD income limits and the percentage of income required to rent those units.

One of the units is an Accessory Dwelling Unit. The other is a two bedroom house. One and two bedroom apartment market rents fall between the two examples.

A 600 square foot Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) renting for \$3,100 a month is described in the March 9, 2018, edition of the Palo Alto Weekly

on Page 31 at

[https://www.paloaltoonline.com/morguepdf/2018/2018\\_03\\_09.paw.section1.pdf](https://www.paloaltoonline.com/morguepdf/2018/2018_03_09.paw.section1.pdf).

That ADU rent is 30% of the income of a three-person family earning 120% of the median county income, or 33% of a four-person family earning the median county income.

A 997 square foot 2 Bedroom, 1 Bath house at 850 Boyce Avenue available on May 1, 2018, is currently listed for a one-year rental at \$4,800 a month at <https://hotpads.com/850-boyce-ave-palo-alto-ca-94301-lm7hu4q/pad?propertyTypes=house&z=12&lat=37.4577&lon=-122.1732&border=false>.

I believe that house is currently renting for \$4,500 a month.

That rent for that house at \$4,500 a month is 30% of the income of an eight-person family earning 120% of the County median income.

The rent for that same house at the listed price of \$4,800 a month is 32% of the income of an eight-person family earning 120% of the County median income.

I urge you to limit your recommendation for an AH Combining District to deed-restricted rent levels for designated income classes.

Sincerely,

Herb Borock

**From:** [Arthur Keller](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable Housing  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 2:20:33 PM

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Dear Planning and Transportation Commission members,

I support building more truly affordable housing. I do think that creating an Affordable Housing overlay zone based on the specifications of one potential project, however meritorious that project may be, is a bad planning practice. The fact that the Daily Post reported on March 9, 2018 (page 3) that there are other potential sites that Palo Alto Housing has identified that may qualify for this proposed zoning indicates that a broader analysis of the merits and impacts of the proposed overlay zone should be considered in the context of the other sites that may be affected.

I agree with the proposal of the *ad hoc* committee and recommend adoption of the *ad hoc* committee's recommendations.

Sincerely,  
Arthur Keller  
Corina Way  
Palo Alto

**From:** [dskeehn@pacbell.net](mailto:dskeehn@pacbell.net)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Ad Hoc Committee  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 3:21:27 PM

---

Dear Planning & Transportation Commissioners:

Please accept the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee as put forth in the last two pages of the staff report. While supporting the development at Wilton Court, our community needs more time to review the proposed Affordable Housing Combining District and to weigh other options for achieving its lofty goals.

Thank you.

Suzanne Keehn  
Orme St.  
Barron Park

**From:** [Kirsten Flynn](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Wilton Court affordable housing.  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 11:31:42 AM

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Dear Commissioners,

I am a life long Palo Alto Resident, having been raised here and having raised 3 children here. I am a past owner of a BMR unit, through the Palo Alto Housing Corp, and present homeowner in Ventura. Some of the things that I love about my neighborhood are that it is more economically diverse than the rest of Palo Alto, that it is close to the Park bike boulevard, Caltrain and the 22 bus line.

I am, thus in favor of both transit oriented development, and BMR housing. However this AHCD proposal is moving ahead without citizen oversight and without a deep analysis the over all effect on the comprehensive plan.

I feel especially frustrated because it primarily affects Palo Alto neighborhoods sandwiched in between bus corridors and Caltrain, namely Ventura, Evergreen Park and Charleston Park. Southgate would be affected, but there are no lots for redevelopment available there. North Palo Alto, Old Palo Alto, Professorville, Crescent Park, Duvneck, SoForest, most of Midtown, and Palo Verde will all be safe and unaffected. I believe that before the city zones a radical increase of density, that dis-proportionately affects one neighborhood, they should engage that neighborhood in the planning process.

I would suggest that we should approve the Wilton Court project without creating a sweeping zoning change just to achieve it's approval.

Thank you for reading my comments.

Kirsten A. Flynn  
[REDACTED] Matadero Avenue.

## Planning and Transportation Public Comment 3-14-18

**From:** [kemp650@aol.com](mailto:kemp650@aol.com)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable Housing Combining District Proposed Zoning Ordinance - need more time to review before decision is made  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 9:50:17 AM

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Dear Planning & Transportation Commissioners:

Please accept the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee as put forth in the last two pages of the staff report. While supporting the development at Wilton Court, our community needs more time to review the proposed Affordable Housing Combining District.

Thank you.

Susan Kemp  
Ventura Neighborhood



**From:** [Randy Mont-Reynaud](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#); [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Constructive Ideas for Affordable Housing  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 9:21:01 AM  
**Attachments:** [AFFORDABLE HOUSING.pdf](#)

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Dear Planners and Council Members,

Affordable housing? Let's think about this. And think again. What sort of place is this, anyway? I've been living here for 38 years, raised 3 children, have been a student, a renter, a homeowner, then a renter again...Like many, I am now a working grandmother, and I'd surely hope there will be room for me to stay in our small city. Where do you stand?

In my many classrooms, my goal has always been to educate the heart. I'll speak to that now.

Our community, MOST of our community I should hope, is in favor of providing Affordable Housing - AND IN SHORT ORDER. Please don't disappoint? No one on the council, committee or street should not be on board with the proposed relaxed standards that will promote construction (can we say, immediate construction?) of Affordable Housing so seniors, families with disabled children, low income workers, veterans and disabled young adults can remain where they have grown up or grown old.

I hope not to be disappointed that our community, would want their legacy - or part of it - to be deployed to PAY IT FORWARD, and sustain us.

Among the proposals are the relaxed standards (Relax! Just Do It!) greater square footage, flexibility on retail requirements, parking standards...But, no need to build us a Taj Mahal folks, just four walls and a roof, some indoor plumbing would be great...

And, **here's a constructive idea** (pun intended) Why not consider taking over some existing apartment complexes (whose landlord's may be kvetching about their profit margins!) — Could the city consider BUYING up existing apartment complexes, and converting them into Affordable Housing?

Having lived here for 38 years, I've seen many changes but I hope hearts and minds are still in the spirit of the Civil Rights Movement...Facilitate provision for our diverse population. Keep Palo Alto diverse, and not divided. Please Build back better, more and soon!

Dear Planners and Council Members,

Affordable housing? Let's think about this. And think again. What sort of place is this, anyway? I've been living here for 38 years, raised 3 children, have been a student, a renter, a homeowner, then a renter again...Like many, I am now a working grandmother, and I'd surely hope there will be room for me to stay in our small city. Where do you stand?

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r

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With warmest regards,

Randy Mont-Reynaud, PhD

ISAIAH 58: ""Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"

650 858 1558 (cell)

**Our 501 c-3 is "If Pigs Could Fly - Haiti" Visit us here:**

[www.ifpigscouldflyhaiti.org](http://www.ifpigscouldflyhaiti.org)

And here is my blog: <http://www.haitinextdoor.com/>

**From:** [Eric Rosenblum](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#); [Palo Alto Forward Board](#); [Gitelman, Hillary](#); [Lait, Jonathan](#)  
**Subject:** Petition (269 signatories) urging decisive action on tonight's Affordable Housing Overlay at the PTC  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 8:38:42 AM

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To the Palo Alto Planning Commission, City Council and Planning Department staff,

- 1) We support the priority for housing for low-income residents in Palo Alto's Housing Element, Comprehensive Plan and Housing Work Plan.
- 2) We appreciate the interest of our non profit housing organization Palo Alto Housing in developing housing for low-income and special needs residents on the Wilton Court site.
- 3) We support the staff's affordable housing overlay ordinance to remove barriers and encourage financial feasibility of housing for low-income residents at Wilton Court and other sites.
- 4) We encourage the staff to explain to the community why their proposed ordinance is needed and how it affects the feasibility of achieving our goals for the development of more housing for low-income residents, many of whom have been on waiting lists for many years.
- 5) We encourage the staff to bring their recommended ordinance and reasoning forward to the City Council in addition to any changes proposed by the PTC

Eric Rosenblum

President, Palo Alto Forward

On behalf of our members and the signatories below

**Below are 269 of your fellow citizens who want you to take decisive action on this measure:**

Alex Landau

Alexander Arce

Alexander Dunlap

Alexandria Gilbert

Alice Anne Martineau

Alice Smith

Alison Kennedy

Alison Mcnalk

Alma Phillips

Amie Ashton  
Amy Balsom  
Amy Bryman  
Amy Sung  
Andrea Fink  
Anita Lusebrink  
Ann Lieberman  
Anna Berns  
Anne Hare  
Annette Isaacson  
Antonella Di Francia  
Barbara Goodwin  
Barbara Gross  
Barbara Kingsley  
Bernice Fischer  
Bette Kiernan  
Bety Bechtel  
Biju George  
Bonnie Packer  
Bret Andersen  
Callen Rain  
Carina Rossner  
Carol Lamont  
Catherine Dolton  
Charlotte Mazur  
Christian Preseau  
Christianne Dennison  
Clayton Nall  
Cristina Ballerio  
Daniel Dulitz  
David Kleiman  
David Moran  
David Moss  
David Schiessler  
David Solnick  
Dawn Billman  
Dena Mossar  
Dennis Irwin  
Diana Reddy

Diane Bailey  
Diane Meier  
Diane Morin  
Diane Rolfe  
Donald Barr  
Doris Petersen  
Dost Mohammad Haidery  
Dov Tamler  
Drew Maran  
Edward Hillard  
Elaine Uang  
Elijah Spiegel  
Elizabeth Lasky  
Elizabeth Weal  
Elizabeth Adibi  
Elizabeth Russell  
Elizabeth Schneider  
Ellen Smith  
Ellen Turbow  
Ellen Uhrbrock  
Emily Peltason  
Enedina Rodriguez  
Eric Lin  
Fe Fan  
Gary Fine  
Gaspard Van Koningsveld  
Gaye Courtney  
Geetha Srikantan  
Geoff Paulsen  
Geraldine Maro  
Gheorghe Cascaval  
Gina Dalma  
Gita Dedek  
Grant Dasher  
Greg Kinman  
Gregory Stevens  
Harvey Schloss  
Jack Fuller  
Jamie Schiessler

Jan Stokley  
Jan Fenwick  
Jan Rubens  
Jan Skotheim  
Jane Moss  
Janice Apol  
Jayashri Srikantiah  
Jean Dawes  
Jeff Oberdorfer  
Jeffrey Salzman  
Jennifer Kaplan  
Jennifer Dibrienza  
Jennifer Gonsalves  
Jennifer Keltner  
Jeny Smith  
Jeralyn Moran  
Jeremy Hoffman  
Jerry Schwarz  
Jerry Underdal  
Jessica Clark  
Jim Fox  
Joan Macdonald  
Joan Phelan  
John Hamilton  
John Kelley  
Jonathan Prosnit  
Joseph Makowski  
Joy Sleizer  
Joy Wright  
Joyce Tavrow  
Judy Adams  
Julan Chu  
Julia Weber  
Julie Reis  
Justine Burt  
K King  
Karen Kalinsky  
Karen Penstock  
Karen Sachs

Katherine Bass  
Katherine Dumont  
Katherine Talbot  
Katherine Warner  
Kathy Durham  
Kathy Foote  
Kathy Schmidt  
Kellie Villanueva  
Kevin Moore  
Kevin Watts  
Kimberly Toth  
Kristal Caidoy  
Kumiko Yoshinari  
Kyle Borland  
Laurie T Jarrett  
Leonor Delgado  
Leora Tanjuatco  
Linda Henigin  
Lindsay Walker  
Linnea Wickstrom  
Lisa Bao  
Lisa Peschcke-Koedt  
Lisa Ratner  
Louise Latham  
Lucia Casu  
Lucinda Lenicheck  
Lynnie Melena  
Madison Sites  
Marc Grinberg  
Margaret Rosenbloom  
Maria Marriott  
Marian Slattery  
Marianna Grossman  
Marianne Mueller  
Marie Anthony  
Mariela Morales  
Mark Michael  
Markus Fromherz  
Marlene Prendergast



Marly Carlisle  
Martha Gregory  
Martha Shirk  
Mary Jo Levy  
Mathias Siegel  
Matthew Avant  
Maximilian Kapczynski  
Megan Kanne  
Mehdi Alhassani  
Melanie Cross  
Melissa Miranda  
Meseret Gebresilassie  
Michelle Mackenzie  
Mike Anderson  
Mike Buchanan  
Milo Trauss  
Mira Edelman  
Misti Bico  
Monica Nanez  
Nadav Gur  
Nadine Martinez  
Nancy Breneau  
Nancy Olson  
Nancy Smith  
Nancy Tamler  
Naphtali Knox  
Neeraj Mehdiratta  
Nisar Shaikh  
Omar Vigil  
Owen Byrd  
Ozzie Fallick  
Patama Gur  
Patricia Mcbrayer  
Patricia Saffir  
Patty Irish  
Paul Gregory  
Paul Heft  
Pek Lum  
Per Maresca

Peter Eckart  
Peter Maresca  
Peter Rice  
Phyllis Brown  
Quinn Peters  
Rachel Wright  
Randy Mont-Reynaud  
Randy Salim  
Raul Rojas  
Rebecca Richardson  
Richard Tway  
Robert English  
Roberta Ahlquist  
Ron Hall  
Rubi Esquivel  
Ruth Consul  
Sally Wood  
Sam Blackshear  
Samuel Fendell  
Sandra Peralta  
Sandra Slater  
Sarah Bell  
Sarit Schube  
Sheeba George  
Shelli Dorf  
Sherry Brown  
Sheryl Klein  
Shilpi Banerjee  
Shirley Finfrock  
Stephanie Klein  
Stephanie Martinson  
Stephen Reller  
Steve Emslie  
Steve Frances  
Steve Joh  
Steve Pierce  
Steven Atneosen  
Steven Baker  
Susan And Harry Hartzell

Susan Groves

Susan Owicki

Susan Sico

Susie Siegel

Sylvia Star-Lack

Tahira Piracha

Ted O'hanlon

Theresa Chen

Thomas Wasow

Tim Bauman

Todd Daly

Tomoko Yamade

Tory Bers

Trina Lovercheck

Trish Mulvey

Urs Hoelzle

Victoria Thorp

Virginia Marans

Virginia Pirrotta

Virginia Tincher

**From:** [Noah Fiedel](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** More consideration and public outreach regarding the AH Combining District / Wilton Court  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 13, 2018 3:11:08 PM

---

Dear Planning Commission,

I'm a resident of the Ventura neighborhood, specifically on Wilton Ave, and am concerned about the proposed project at Wilton & El Camino. I ask that the commission make more time for consideration (study and data, such as the Alma project in downtown), as well as public outreach to the community. Until now, all widespread communication about the combining district mentioned only the Fry's site. Now the proposal appears shifted to include Wilton Court as a proposed way to drive the process forward.

Specific concerns about the Wilton Court project:

1. **Parking.** The street is already over-parked with cars from apartments and one business on El Camino. The proposal to under-park at **0.5 parking spaces is far insufficient.**
2. **Transit availability.** Unlike the Alma project in downtown, directly across the street from Caltrain, we are a full mile from Caltrain! I don't understand how this is considered adjacent to high quality transit. The VTA busses are simply ineffective at going to most employment or activities in the area, and are not be a substitute for cars.
3. **Height impact** on the low-rise residential neighborhood. A 50 foot structure will be looming over mostly single story houses on the block. It will replace far away views of trees and mountains with a wall. 50 feet is extreme for the end of a residential block.

For the record, I support more, more dense, and more affordable housing. However, the project *as proposed* goes vastly beyond both zoning and common sense.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Noah Fiedel  
Wilton Ave

**From:** [Rebecca Sanders](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Enough Concerns to Warrant Applying the Brakes  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 13, 2018 5:01:50 PM

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Dear Commissioners:

I have read with great interest the staff report in preparation for tomorrow's meeting. Our neighborhood is buzzing with interest and concern about, what they believe to be, the sudden appearance of this new zone. I have talked with friends on Wilton, Matadero, Park, and Fernando plus I have interested neighbors emailing me through our the VenturaPaloAlto.org and Nextdoor. I have urged everyone to email you or come to the meeting if they want to have their ideas heard.

For myself, I am very interested in the Ad Hoc Committee's proposal. It supports Wilton Court, allows more time for zoning change review and even posits a reasonable two tiered system for building affordable housing.

I am eager to house the folks that are the **most vulnerable first**. Let's house the folks that are on PAH's waiting list. Let's make them a priority and we can keep Ventura (and all of Palo Alto) diverse, which includes economically diverse.

Please do not approve the Affordable Housing Combining District Ordinance as it stands.

Thank you.

Becky Sanders  
Moderator, Ventura Neighborhood Association

## Planning and Transportation Public Comment 3-14-18

**From:** [Evelyn Goodrich](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [George](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable Housing Combining District zone  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 13, 2018 5:38:54 PM

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**Palo Altans need time to study the effects of the adoption of the** Affordable Housing Combining District zone. The Planning and Transportation Commission is urged to prepare public presentations to the residents of the affected areas of Palo Alto if this zoning is adopted to inform them of what may happen to their neighborhoods and to give them a voice as to whether or not it should be adopted.

Evelyn Goodrich  
Ventura Resident

**From:** [Shirley Wang](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Wilton Court Project  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 13, 2018 9:39:19 PM

---

Dear Commissioner,

As a resident on Wilton Ave., I have following deep concerns about the Wilton Court Project with 50-60 units housing on El Camino and Wilton.

1. Parking

We already have congested street parking due to crowded businesses nearby, especially during the weekends, lunch and dinner time. With cars blocked on both sides of Wilton, the street has only one car space left for drivers.

2. Traffic safety

Many families with young kids have moved into this neighborhood. I have witnessed many accidents and near accidents lately. A teenage bicyclist was hit by a car at El Camino and Ventura just yesterday.

It's also very dangerous to left turn from Wilton to El Camino without any traffic lights.

We'd like to know how you are going to address these tow concerns.

Thanks,  
Shirley

## Planning and Transportation Public Comment 3-14-18

**From:** [Paul Machado](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** New Affordable Housing District  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 13, 2018 10:06:49 AM

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Dear Planning & Transportation Commissioners:

Please accept the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee as put forth in the last two pages of the staff report. More time however is requested to review the proposed Affordable Housing Combining District.

Thank you.

Paul Machado  
Evergreen Park




**From:** [Margaret Rosenbloom](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Affordable housing for Palo Alto  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 13, 2018 11:21:19 AM

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I am writing to express my support for the Affordable Housing Overlay as written, as this will make it possible to develop the affordable housing our city so badly needs. The proposed amendments re distance from transit, amount of parking, height, and low income eligibility levels may meet the interests of some in the city but will cause delay and diminishment in what could be a major breakthrough in Palo Alto's housing impasse.

Palo Alto can not afford to remain stuck in a mindset of being a small town but must face the reality and demands of the current housing-jobs crunch. The Affordable Housing Overlay is a significant effort towards this goal and I urge the PTC to refer the ordinance as written to the City Council for their consideration and action under guidelines of the Comprehensive Plan.

Margaret J. Rosenbloom 

**From:** [Steve Raney](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** item 2: Affordable Housing Combining District Draft Ordinance  
**Date:** Monday, March 12, 2018 9:57:16 PM  
**Attachments:** [Silicon Valley Micro-Apartments.pdf](#)

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Dear Planning Commission,

Please consider a companion overlay to the proposed affordable housing overlay, a zoning overlay for about 50 to 100 zero-car, transit-oriented-development, affordable-by-design moderate income (affordable) microunits. IE some sort of a modest pilot project to show that zero-car microunit housing can succeed in PA. Google is pursuing microunits for North Bayshore, to be built by union labor in Vallejo. For many folks, a market rate 8'x20' microunit renting at \$1,300/mo is twice as good of an option as what they have now. Zoning needs to change to make such "maximally mitigated" housing legal in PA.

Further recommendations:

- Ensure that microunit zoning overlay language is vetted by for-profit microunit developers (Panoramic Interests, etc) to validate that the overlay would motivate a developer to acquire control of a parcel and bring a proposal forward. The private sector currently has zero motivation to bring a microunit proposal forward in PA (and in most Bay Area cities).
- Microunits are an innovative concept, so FUD should be addressed by forming a blue ribbon microunit learning committee. Activities could include:
  - Visit a Bay Area microunit site, such as 1321 Mission St. in SF
  - Visit a unionized Bay Area microunit manufacturer, such as the Vallejo Mare Island FactoryOS facility.
  - Chat with Google real-estate about their microunit projects.
- To further address FUD, put on a local microunit event. This can be modeled after Mountain View's May 2016 event:
  - <https://patch.com/california/mountainview/mountain-view-host-luncheon-addressing-lack-affordable-housing-options>
  - <http://www.mountainview.gov/civica/press/display.asp?layout=1&Entry=1294>
  - (Palo Alto Forward put on a microunit event at the Institute for the Future in 2015.)
  - There is an upcoming modular housing event in Sunnyvale on Thursday:  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/modular-construction-can-we-build-affordability-by-building-more-affordably-tickets-43210560951>

More details provided for a "zero-car, transit-oriented-development, affordable-by-design moderate income affordable microunits overlay" in the attached PDF.

Thanks for your consideration, - Steve

=====

Steve Raney  
Pitman Ave, Palo Alto



**Silicon Valley / Peninsula Zero-Car Unsubsidized TOD Micro-Apartments**

Opportunity to build unsubsidized moderate income homes.

Link to this google doc: <http://bit.ly/micro-aps>

**1. EXAMPLE:**

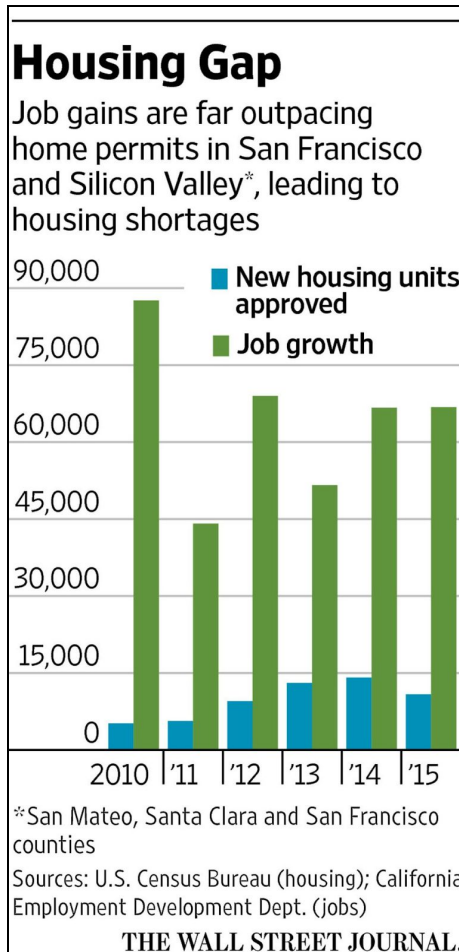
*The Panoramic: 160 microunits, 0 cars, 0 car parking, 180 bikes. 761 DU/acre. 11 stories, 120'. 1321 Mission St., SF.*

<http://www.panoramic.com/cityspaces-location/mission-san-francisco/>



**2. WHY: Housing crisis**

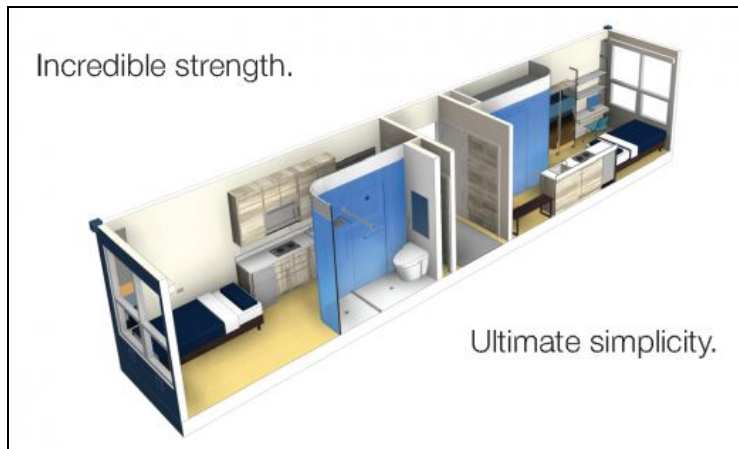
According to WSJ, for the past six years in SF and Silicon Valley, 300K jobs added with only 40K new homes:



Silicon Valley has a nationally-prominent housing crisis/shortage. There is a market failure whereby for- and non-profit developers have not built moderate income (80% to 120% of area median income) housing.

California (SB375, etc) and the Bay Area (Plan Bay Area 2040) have adopted ambitious GHG reduction policy objectives, but have not taken credible steps in the housing policy domain to implement and meet those objectives.

### 3. A NEW HOUSING PRODUCT:



*Two micro-units, as they would ship from overseas*



*Ergonomic interior of 8' x 20', 9' high micro-studio*

- \$1,300/mo rental (unsubsidized moderate income affordable). 160 square foot micro-studio. Two other configurations are available, including 650 square foot four-bedroom apartment.
- \$8 per square foot monthly rent provides high return for investors
- Zero car parking, lots of bike parking, carshare.
- Transit oriented development. Walking distance to Caltrain or BART. Located within walkable downtown areas with restaurants and activities.
- Compared to current housing options, microunits are twice as good for thousands of Bay Area folks.
- Per-capita GHG is 25% of suburban Bay Area average.
- Stackable steel housing units manufactured in Vallejo by union labor at Factory OS. This method is 20% less costly than traditional methods.
- 75' tall provides the best affordability, but other heights work
- Can exploit small lots of 7,000 square feet or less.
- Most often, the design is not comprehended by a city's general plan and zoning, so a City Council legislative act is required to approve.
- This innovative housing concept is challenging to approve as there are no examples. City staffs expect that their City Councils will require a market study to demonstrate sufficient demand for these units. As far as city staff and developer opinion, there is consensus that these micro-apartments will rent quickly given that other housing options are 2X the cost.
- In San Francisco, private colleges obtained 20-year leases on units and now rent them to their students. Likewise, a city, employer, or non-profit could lease units and then rent them. One possibility is for a city to create a housing fund, lease units at \$1,300, then subsidize rent to rent at a low-income or very-low-income level.
- See the Feb 2015 NY Times story: [New York's first micro-apartments](#).

#### 4. MARKET FAILURE

Google and Facebook have determined that the public sector cannot make a dent in the housing crisis, so they are reluctantly forced to get into the housing business.

- One example: Google Will Buy Modular Homes to Address Housing Crunch - [The Wall Street Journal](#) and [Mercury News article](#). Units to be manufactured by union labor on Vallejo's Mare Island by Factory OS (<https://factoryos.com/>), a modular-home startup.

The low and very-low income affordable housing sector is virtuous, but requires subsidies. Subsidies limit housing production to tiny number that does not make a dent. Per our economic system (Capitalism), unsubsidized moderate income affordable can be financed and scaled.

For San Mateo County, \$1,300 is unsubsidized moderate-income affordable housing. <http://housing.smcgov.org/sites/housing.smcgov.org/files/2016smcSTATS.pdf>. AMI is Area Median Income.

Income Category	SRO **	Maximum Affordable Rent Payment (\$)				
		Studio	1-BR	2-BR	3-BR	4-BR
Extremely Low *		645	691	830	959	1,070
Very Low *		1,076	1,153	1,383	1,599	1,783
Low HOME Limit*	1,059	1,076	1,153	1,383	1,599	1,783
High HOME Limit *	1,059	1,380	1,480	1,778	2,046	2,263
HERA Special VLI (50% AMI) ***		HERA Spec. Rents - Go to <a href="http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac/">www.treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac/</a>				
HERA Special Limit (60% AMI) ***						
<b>Low *</b>						
HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR)		1,412	1,814	2,289	2,987	3,556
Median **		2,152	2,306	2,766	3,198	3,566

Compare to local SSF and SF studios for rent (some for \$3,000 per month):

<http://www.apartmentguide.com/apartments/California/South-San-Francisco/0-beds-1z141wj/>

**5. ADVOCACY/EDUCATION:**

Palo Alto Forward

- put on a microunit luncheon at Institute for the Future in 2015. Patrick Kennedy presented.

May 2016, Mountain View

- <https://patch.com/california/mountainview/mountain-view-host-luncheon-addressing-lack-affordable-housing-options>
- <http://www.mountainview.gov/civica/press/display.asp?layout=1&Entry=1294>



**From:** [Jessica Clark](#)  
**To:** [Kniss, Liz \(external\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Planning Commission](#); [Palo Alto Forward Board](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Letter to Council and PTC from Jessica Clark  
**Date:** Monday, March 12, 2018 9:20:03 PM

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Yes Liz you were the only one I did see at the Town Hall, I am so sorry I didn't mention that!  
One project is better than none! I am for whatever we can accomplish and actually get built!  
Best  
Jessica

Have a great day!

On Mar 12, 2018, at 8:51 PM, Liz Kniss <[lizkniss@earthlink.net](mailto:lizkniss@earthlink.net)> wrote:

Thx Jessica- I appreciate hearing from you. And I was at Joe's meeting & again so I heard so many of those very sad and poignant stories.  
We are hoping to at least have one affordable housing project approved this year - two would be better but unlikely.  
Thanks for staying in touch, Liz Kniss

On Mar 12, 2018, at 9:55 PM, Jeremy and Jessica <[jermisica@comcast.net](mailto:jermisica@comcast.net)> wrote:

Greetings to City Council and the PTC,  
I have prepared a letter to you both in hopes to explain my family's personal history in Palo Alto along with our 6 year experience on the BMR Purchase Program waiting list with Palo Alto Housing. I hope to attend the 3/14 meeting and say these words to you personally, however it falls upon my oldest child's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday. I am trying to arrange our family dinner around this meeting. Although I know the project on the table will in no way help my family's personal situation, I still support any and every effort made towards the creation of low income/affordable housing in Palo Alto, whether it be for seniors, disabled, veterans, teachers, first responders, etc. I encourage any of you on the City Council and the PTC and reach out to me to learn more about our daily lives, we cannot expect these struggling groups of citizens to show up at city council meetings, sometimes you might need to go to them. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this.  
Respectfully,  
Jessica Oakson Clark

<March 14 PTC Meeting -Jessica Clark.docx>

**From:** [Jeremy and Jessica](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#); [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** ["Palo Alto Forward Board"](#)  
**Subject:** Letter to Council and PTC from Jessica Clark  
**Date:** Monday, March 12, 2018 6:57:15 PM  
**Attachments:** [March 14 PTC Meeting -Jessica Clark.docx](#)

---

Greetings to City Council and the PTC,

I have prepared a letter to you both in hopes to explain my family's personal history in Palo Alto along with our 6 year experience on the BMR Purchase Program waiting list with Palo Alto Housing. I hope to attend the 3/14 meeting and say these words to you personally, however it falls upon my oldest child's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday. I am trying to arrange our family dinner around this meeting. Although I know the project on the table will in no way help my family's personal situation, I still support any and every effort made towards the creation of low income/affordable housing in Palo Alto, whether it be for seniors, disabled, veterans, teachers, first responders, etc. I encourage any of you on the City Council and the PTC and reach out to me to learn more about our daily lives, we cannot expect these struggling groups of citizens to show up at city council meetings, sometimes you might need to go to them. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this.

Respectfully,

Jessica Oakson Clark



Dear PTC and City Council,

I am a mother of 3 children in PAUSD at Gunn, JLS, and Palo Verde. My husband and I were both born and raised right here in Palo Alto. My children are the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of our family to live here. Our parents have chosen to age in place here along with my 102-year-old grandmother. It is something rare and special that one does not come across often in this day and age. We know we are fortunate to have been able to remain here as long as we have in order to help care for them. My brother and sister-in-law both work and teach in the special education department at Paly. However, just this month due to rental increases they have now had to move further away out of the area. In the past, they utilized public transportation or rode their bikes to work. Unfortunately, now they will have to commute by car and add to the traffic congestion.

My husband is a respiratory therapist at a hospital and I was the owner of Clark Family Daycare for 7 years nestled in a cute house right behind Palo Verde Elementary. Six years ago, skyrocketing rental prices forced me to close my daycare, lose my income, move into a much smaller space for twice the rent, and become eligible for the BMR Purchase Program. We applied with Palo Alto Housing and were given a number on the waiting list. We were in the mid 300's. In the six years since we have been on the list our family has struggled terribly to make ends meet, while our rents just keep rising. In one instance our rent was increased nearly \$1000. Applying and qualifying for scholarships and assistance for our family is something we never imagined we would ever have to do, but sadly now it is our reality.

Our current number on the BMR list is 184. This is not due to 120 families on the list receiving an opportunity to purchase a unit. This is because these people have given up and left. I do not blame them. If my husband and I did not have such strong family roots and support we would be gone as well. It is a completely stressful and hopeless feeling that we constantly deal with every day. Many days I too just want to give up, yet my connection to this community and my family gives me no other choice but to continue on and tell my story.

Over these last few years I have become involved with the civic process by attending City Council meetings and speaking up about housing by sharing my family's story. It is extremely difficult for families like mine or others in even more dire situations to stand up at City Council and share their most personal struggles and experience. This is one of the reasons you see so few of us. When given the right situation they will share their stories. For example, in January, County Supervisor Joe Simitian hosted a Teacher Town Hall at Gunn High School. It was there, in a safe setting, on their terms, over 100 teachers felt comfortable enough to share their personal family struggles. It was truly heartbreaking to hear how our lack of affordable housing and long commutes has affected our teachers and their families' quality of life. I think it would have been very informative for any of the PTC or City Council members to of been in attendance.

I strongly urge the PTC and City Council to remove needless barriers that stand in the way or delay the creation of 100% affordable/low-income housing. There are far too many families and people in our community who are truly struggling right now and are running out of time. It feels as though my family and many others are just holding on by a thread, while those opposed to the creation of low income/affordable housing are holding an open pair of scissors over it waiting to decide whether to simply cut our rope or to let us dangle a little bit longer until we are so worn out we let go. I don't want to let go and I do not want my family's rope to be cut.

Thank you for listening to my story.

Respectfully,

Jessica Clark

**From:** [Robert Moss](#)  
**To:** [Architectural Review Board](#)  
**Cc:** [Council, City; Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Cell Towers in Residential Neighborhoods  
**Date:** Monday, March 12, 2018 3:25:01 PM

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Please reject the request by Verizon to allow cell towers in residential neighborhoods. People currently aren't complaining that they can't get adequate wireless phone service from their homes, and the intrusion of an industrial product (which is what the cell tower equipment is) in residential areas is unnecessary and intrusive. If there is any expansion of the cell system any and all electrical equipment should be buried underground, not sitting on sidewalks and curbs. Verizon has admitted that the towers aren't needed to serve homes in the areas, but will be mainly for visitors who are using cell phones locally. That attitude puts transients over residents, and it is the city's responsibility to prioritize protecting residents, not commercial interests..

Yours very sincerely,

Bob Moss



March 12, 2018

City of Palo Alto Planning and Transportation Commission

Dear Chair Lauing and Commissioners,

Re: March 14, 2018, Agenda Item No. 2: Affordable Housing Combining District Draft Ordinance

Last month, the League of Women Voters of Palo Alto (LWVPA) submitted a letter to you re-iterating our support for efforts by the City to increase the supply of housing for all, particularly for those with lower incomes. Accordingly we encouraged you to not only recommend adoption of the Affordable Housing Combining District Draft Ordinance before you last month, but also to expand its reach to ensure more affordable housing opportunities and units.

However, rather than consider the ordinance in a timely manner, including the important changes recommended in our letter, you deferred this discussion to an ad hoc committee. Staff then incorporated some of the ad hoc recommendations into the revised draft ordinance before you tonight. **LWVPA believes these changes would severely limit the supply of affordable housing in this City. This is contrary to official housing priority of our City Council, which has a goal of producing 300 housing units per year.** As staff reported to City Council on March 5, Palo Alto is way behind in meeting its goals for affordable housing, which adds to the urgency to reduce barriers to building new affordable housing projects.

The staff changes to the draft ordinance **reduce its scope** by decreasing the range from high transit corridors from ½ mile to ¼ mile, and by limiting the application of the ordinance to units for those with households of 60% AMI, ignoring the need for affordable housing for those with moderate incomes. There is a human face to this shortage as residents endure long waiting lists while rents rise each year and struggle with the family challenges of living in substandard and overcrowded housing.

The changes also **create high barriers** for developers of affordable housing projects by increasing the parking requirement from .5 per unit to .5 per bedroom, without any factual basis to support this. **An increased parking requirement means higher costs and fewer units.** The other change that would reduce units is the transitional height limit near multi-family residential neighborhoods. This might make sense next to an R-1 site, but we do not understand the rationale for a 35-foot height limit on a building that is 50 feet distant from an RM-30 zone.

While we are aware that the impetus for developing this Combining District ordinance is the Palo Alto Housing proposal for Wilton Court, we expected that you would consider this ordinance in a broader context, thus allowing for more potential affordable housing projects in appropriate locations in the City. We can have no opinion on the viability of a Development Agreement for the Wilton Court site, but we would not want that effort to defeat the implementation of this important ordinance to allow the development of much needed affordable housing on other appropriate sites in the City.

We urge you to reconsider our recommended changes set forth in our February 10, 2018, letter, attached. These include expanding the combining district to include the Research Park and General Manufacturing Districts; allowing the Planning Director to approve increases in FAR in certain areas; and very importantly, allowing the Planning Director to **waive burdensome retail requirements** in all districts.

Please demonstrate that you are serious about addressing the urgent need for affordable housing in Palo Alto, consistent with the housing priority of our City Council, by recommending an ordinance that **removes barriers** to development of housing for those with low and moderate incomes, rather than one that adds even more obstacles.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bonnie Packer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bonnie Packer  
President, League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

Encl: Feb. 10, 2018, letter to Planning and Transportation Commission



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3921 E. BAYSHORE RD. • PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94303 • 650-903-0600 • [www.lwvpaloalto.org](http://www.lwvpaloalto.org)

February 10, 2018

Palo Alto Planning and Transportation Commission  
250 Hamilton Ave.  
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Chair Lauing and Commissioners,

Re: February 14, 2018, Agenda Item No. 4: Affordable Housing Combining District Draft Ordinance

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto (LWVPA) supports efforts by the City to increase the supply of housing for all, particularly for those with lower incomes.

The Affordable Housing Combining District Draft Ordinance will go a long way to increase the supply of affordable housing in Palo Alto and LWVPA urges you to recommend its adoption to the City Council. However, in the interest of ensuring more affordable housing opportunities and units, we also urge you to consider the following changes to this draft ordinance.

- Expand the scope of the combining district to include the Research Park and General Manufacturing Districts.
- Include language that allows some flexibility regarding the one-half mile distance from the transit corridors. The language, “major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor,” is too limiting and should be broader in scope.
- Allow the Planning Director to approve increases in the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and height where appropriate, particularly in the areas around University Avenue and California Avenue.
- Allow the Planning Director to waive the retail requirements in all districts. Retail usually requires more parking which is expensive to provide. Moreover, the presence of retail in an affordable housing project severely complicates the funding opportunities. Thus, a retail requirement may make an affordable housing project infeasible, even with benefits of the combining district.

For the last two bullets, LWVPA believes that it is important to streamline the entitlement process. To do so, the Planning Director, not the City Council, should have the authority to approve increases in FAR and height and to waive retail requirements.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Bonnie Packer'.

Bonnie Packer  
President, League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

**From:** [LWV of Palo Alto](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** March 14, 2018 Agenda Item No. 2: Affordable Housing Combining District  
**Date:** Monday, March 12, 2018 10:51:44 AM  
**Attachments:** [P&TC AH 3-14-18.docx](#)  
[PTC Itr AH Overlay.docx](#)

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Dear Commissioners,

Attached please find our letter regarding March 14, 2018, Agenda Item No. 2: Affordable Housing Combining District Draft Ordinance. Also attached is the letter we submitted on the same subject on Feb. 10, 2018.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Bonnie Packer,  
President

**League of Women Voters of Palo Alto**  
**3921 E. Bayshore Road**  
**Palo Alto, CA 94303**  
**(650) 903-0600**

**From:** [Susan Monk](#)  
**To:** [Cervantes, Yolanda](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Linnea's email to PTC  
**Date:** Monday, March 12, 2018 11:42:24 AM  
**Attachments:** [phone.png](#)  
[email.png](#)

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Hi Yolanda,

This follows my prior email.

Was the email below received & sent to PTC? If so, can you please forward it to me because I can't seem to find it.

(Perhaps because I was traveling in Spain last half of February and got behind on emails)

Best,  
Sue



Susan K. Monk, JD

☎ [619.804.4141](tel:619.804.4141)

✉ [susankmonk@gmail.com](mailto:susankmonk@gmail.com)

**Let's Connect!**



Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Linnea Wickstrom <[ljwickstrom@comcast.net](mailto:ljwickstrom@comcast.net)>

**Date:** February 19, 2018 at 3:55:18 PM PST

**To:** Susan Monk <[susankmonk@gmail.com](mailto:susankmonk@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Linnea's email to PTC

Hello, Sue

I just sent an email supporting the affordable housing zone to  
[Planning.commission@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Planning.commission@cityofpaloalto.org)

I'm writing you because I'm curious to see if Chitra relays it to the Commission.  
Would you let me know on Wednesday or Thursday if you receive it?

Thanks,  
Linnea

Here's the email I sent.

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Commission Chair Lauing, Vice Chair Monk, and Commissioners,

I'm sorry I missed the P&TC meeting in which the new zoning district recommendation was deferred! I would have spoken in support of the proposed zoning ordinance for affordable housing. I was struck by the accuracy of Commissioner Alcheck's description+ of the "typical participant in the planning process." He's right, and that's a pity. The people who need this kind of housing can't, for all sorts of reasons, represent themselves.

But some of us represent them. I, for instance, have come to recognize the need because of my adult son with autism. So I speak for him and hundreds of other developmentally disabled people like him who desperately need affordable housing so that they can learn to live relatively independently before their parents die.

In a larger sense, I support affordable housing for lots of types of people and recognize that Palo Alto cannot preserve itself in amber. I loved the horse pasture that is now Palo Alto Square but times change. The City has built out a lot since 1966 (just to pick a year) and must and will continue to do so. Therefore, I strongly support the proposed overlay and even expanding it.

Linnea Wickstrom  
Palo Alto

*+ He described a typical participant in the planning process as a "well-to-do homeowner, strongly averse to changes in their surroundings, time-rich, opinionated and articulate." By contrast, the commission rarely hears from low-income renters, young adults who can't afford to move out of their parents' homes and people "lingering on an affordable-housing waiting list."*



**From:** [Martha](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Ventura--Fry's site  
**Date:** Monday, March 12, 2018 10:25:34 AM

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Hello,

I've read many articles about plans for the Ventura--Fry's site, but no reference to what some of us need. We would like you to consider sitting aside some land for apartments for the Developmentally Disabled. Palo Alto is lacking in helping the disabled, and housing would improve their lives. At present many still live at home with elderly parents and might be homeless eventually if the local governments do not take action. It would be best if they can be near services. Presently Palo Alto only has one apartment complex for them which has a long wait list.

Thank you for your consideration,

Martha Gregory

From: [Richard Brand](#)  
To: [Neilson Buchanan](#); [Kamhi, Philip](#); [Hur, Mark](#); [Keene, James](#); [Gitelman, Hillary](#); [Mello, Joshua](#)  
Cc: [Carol Scott](#); [Keith Bennett](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Council, City](#); [Flaherty, Michelle](#); [Bob McGrew](#); [Brand, Richard](#); [Norman H. Beamer](#); [Rob George](#); [Furman, Sheri](#); [Becky Sanders](#); [Suzanne Keehn](#)  
Subject: Re: new non-resident permits and optimizing the biz registry  
Date: Monday, February 26, 2018 2:10:34 PM

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I'm getting a lot of complaints from neighbors who are surprised (some shocked) at a 100% increase in the cost to park their car in front of their own house. Some don't have driveways. When did this occur? And the increase for employees will only encourage them to "game" the system.

Neilson: In paragraph 1 you have a question about " impact on show rates ". What is a show rate?  
Richard Brand  
RPP Stakeholder

-----Original Message-----

From: Neilson Buchanan  
Sent: Feb 26, 2018 1:18 PM  
To: Philip Kamhi , Mark Hur , James Keene , Hillary Gitelman , Joshua Mello  
Cc: Carol Scott , Keith Bennett , Planning Commission , City Council , Michelle Flaherty , Bob McGrew , Richard Brand , "Norman H. Beamer" , Rob George , Sheri Furman , Becky Sanders , Suzanne Keehn  
Subject: new non-resident permits and optimizing the biz registry

1. Everyone seems to have received the city's postcard about the cost of non-resident permits. It is not clear if non-resident permits will be available on a 6 month and 12 month basis. What is your position about the impact on show rates when permits are available on 6 and 12 month basis?

2. There is confusion also about the status of the business registry. It may be possible that the registry is unable to start on schedule March 31. It is out of sync with RPPs. According to the website, there is an issue to change vendors.

Below in italics is statement on the city website. This information was brought to my attention by employers who are seeing better management of parking programs.

***2018 Registration/Renewal:** At this time, the City is not accepting applications. The City is changing payment processing vendors and will notify businesses when applications are being accepted. Please visit this website in early March for further updates if you do not hear from the City in advance.*

The business registry is an important, mandated cog in the RPP system. Non resident permits should not be issued for one year without employer participation in the business registry. Furthermore the database of the current registry is far too shallow to support the TMA and robust RPP programs.

The possibility of a new vendor and better management data is exciting. Is there a way you can convene leadership of the TMA and stakeholders in the RPPs to understand of data capture and to elevate the utility of a stagnant biz registry database?

Neilson Buchanan

[REDACTED]

Palo Alto, CA 94301

[REDACTED]

[cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com](mailto:cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com)

From: [Neilson Buchanan](#)  
To: [Kamhi, Philip](#); [Hur, Mark](#); [Keene, James](#); [Gitelman, Hillary](#); [Mello, Joshua](#)  
Cc: [Carol Scott](#); [Keith Bennett](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Council, City](#); [Flaherty, Michelle](#); [Bob McGrew](#); [Brand, Richard](#); [Norman H. Beamer](#); [Rob George](#); [Furman, Sheri](#); [Becky Sanders](#); [Suzanne Keehn](#)  
Subject: new non-resident permits and optimizing the biz registry  
Date: Monday, February 26, 2018 1:18:42 PM

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1. Everyone seems to have received the city's postcard about the cost of non-resident permits. It is not clear if non-resident permits will be available on a 6 month and 12 month basis. What is your position about the impact on show rates when permits are available on 6 and 12 month basis?

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The possibility of a new vendor and better management data is exciting. Is there a way you can convene leadership of the TMA and stakeholders in the RPPs to understand of data capture and to elevate the utility of a stagnant biz registry database?

Neilson Buchanan  
[REDACTED]  
Palo Alto, CA 94301

[REDACTED]  
[cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com](mailto:cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com)

**From:** [Nadia Naik](#)  
**To:** [Kou, Lydia](#); [Scharff, Gregory \(internal\)](#); [Fine, Adrian](#); [cory.wobach@cityofpaloalto.com](mailto:cory.wobach@cityofpaloalto.com)  
**Cc:** [Shikada, Ed](#); [Keene, James](#); [Gitelman, Hillary](#); [Mello, Joshua](#); [De Geus, Robert](#); [Council, City](#); [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Rail Corridor: Issue of 2% grades and Local Policy Maker Working Group Meetings  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 21, 2018 8:44:49 AM  
**Attachments:** [PFRUG Letter to Peninsula Cities 11-3-10.pdf](#)  
[PFRUG Letter to HSRA 11-3-10.pdf](#)  
[PFRUG Correspondence JPB BOD 2 2 17.pdf](#)

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Two more historical points of reference relating to 2%.

In 2010, the High Speed Rail Authority "accidentally" looked at a 2% grade in Palo Alto.

Here's the link to the blog where this was noted back in 2010:

<http://caltrain-hsr.blogspot.com/2010/08/alternatives-analysis-analysis-part-3.html>

From the blog:

- **Freight grades:** we were told all along that 1% is the limiting gradient for heavy freight. Not so in Palo Alto, where there is a 2% grade shown in the [track profiles](#) (page 15). Recall that the steepness of a grade [has no impact on passenger comfort](#), frequent references to roller-coasters notwithstanding. (This question of *dynamics* seems to confuse civil engineers, who deal mostly with *statics*.) [If a freight train can handle a 2% grade in Palo Alto, it can certainly handle a 2% grade anywhere else; that's the concept of ruling grade.](#) Considering that steeper grades would [greatly reduce the footprint](#) of any elevated section, for example, the massive Mary Avenue rail overpass in Sunnyvale shown on [page 18](#), why are 2% grades not the rule?

At the time, HSR blamed freight as the reason we could not look at 2% on the corridor. This was refuted by the Peninsula Freight User Group (PFRUG).

Their correspondence is attached.

Nadia

On Wed, Feb 21, 2018 at 7:18 AM, Nadia Naik <[nadianaik@gmail.com](mailto:nadianaik@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Rail Committee Members, City Council and Planning and Transportation Committee,

As you know, the issue of whether or not the train can be designed at a 2% grade instead of 1% is one of the driving factors in both cost and flexibility of alternatives for the grade separations on the corridor.

In the latest Trenching and Tunneling white paper that will be discussed at today's rail committee meeting, the consultants make reference to the fact that 2% grade would be considered a design variation.

While this is true, it is also true that these guidelines are outdated and that many elected leaders have

requested that a future short-line operator that comes to the corridor (per the latest agreements with Union Pacific) are able to operate at 2%.

In fact, just this summer, the Mayors of San Francisco and San Jose sent a letter (attached) to Union Pacific specifically requesting that flexibility. They write in part "*We ask that Union Pacific, as part of your RFP, indicate to potential bidders that **this change is likely** and that the short-line operator **will be expected to operate on a system that includes grades up to two percent.***" (bolding is mine)

As additional background (especially for those that are new to the Rail committee or this topic generally), I've included a background information email I sent last year that explains why Union Pacific will now be selecting short-line operator for the corridor and thus why other cities are targeting Union Pacific's selection process as the appropriate place to make such comments.

I can't recall if Palo Alto ever sent a letter of support to the comments made by San Jose and San Francisco regarding 2% or if we wrote our own letter, but I know this issue has come up repeatedly at the Local Policy Maker Working Group Meetings. Given the constraints of this project along the corridor, it is vital that we send a similar letter (if we're not too late!).

Additionally, we would request that a report back from Palo Alto's member on Caltrain's Local Policy Maker Working Group (LPMG) become a STANDING agenda item for all Rail Committee Meetings going forward to allow the city council member who attended, or the alternate, to update us on what discussions are being held in that body as they relate to the planning of our corridor.

Sincerely,  
Nadia Naik  
CARRD

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Nadia Naik** <[nadianaik@gmail.com](mailto:nadianaik@gmail.com)>  
Date: Mon, Jan 30, 2017 at 8:46 PM  
Subject: Caltrain / UPRR agreement Update  
To: "DuBois, Tom" <[tom.dubois@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:tom.dubois@cityofpaloalto.org)>, Greg Scharff <[greg.scharff@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:greg.scharff@cityofpaloalto.org)>, [adrian.fine@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:adrian.fine@cityofpaloalto.org), [eric.filseth@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:eric.filseth@cityofpaloalto.org)  
Cc: James Keene <[James.Keene@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:James.Keene@cityofpaloalto.org)>, Joshua D Mello <[joshuah.mello@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:joshuah.mello@cityofpaloalto.org)>, info <[info@calhsr.com](mailto:info@calhsr.com)>, "Stump, Molly" <[molly.stump@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:molly.stump@cityofpaloalto.org)>, Pat Burt <[patburt11@gmail.com](mailto:patburt11@gmail.com)>, [liz.kniss@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:liz.kniss@cityofpaloalto.org), [Karen.holman@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Karen.holman@cityofpaloalto.org), [greg.tanaka@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:greg.tanaka@cityofpaloalto.org), [lydia.kou@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:lydia.kou@cityofpaloalto.org), [cory.wobach@cityofpaloalto.com](mailto:cory.wobach@cityofpaloalto.com)

Dear Rail Committee Members:

As you know, Caltrain is currently laser focused on obtaining their electrification money from the Feds. While we appreciate the importance of the electrification funding, we are very concerned about the recently announced deal between UPRR and Caltrain and we're trying to figure out what to do.

**BACKGROUND:**

The 1991 Trackage Rights Agreement (attached) was (until the new UPRR document was signed recently) THE guiding document in terms of the Caltrain/UP relationship. Under the 1991 agreement, it was generally understood that if Caltrain materially upgraded the corridor in any manner that would be incompatible with freight (like electrification) then Caltrain

reserved the right to kick UP off the corridor. This has always been considered the "nuclear" option - since freight is seen as a valuable asset to some communities.

One alternative that was always an exciting prospect was to have a "short line" operator take over freight on the corridor (since we know this SF-SJ route is a money loser for UP) and thus still have freight on the corridor, but have more flexibility on how freight operates on the line. A short-line operator allows the opportunity to have electrified freight (thus compatible with electrification) and to have more aggressive grade steepness of the tracks and lower height clearances (both of which reduce the cost of grade seps for cities along the corridor).

## **The NEW DEAL:**

A deal was announced at the end of the JPB's January board meeting's closed session. The agenda simply said they would be discussing "two potential suits." The announcement of a deal between UP/Caltrain was, therefore, a complete surprise.

The contract was leaked to Clem Tillier's blog - and we have NOT seen the concurrently executed agreements related to this agreement since Caltrain has not posted this publicly. We'd like to thank Councilmember DuBois for asking Molly Stump to help us try to obtain them.

What we're missing (and the sections in which they're mentioned)

- 1.2.1 South San Francisco Agreement
- 1.2.2 Settlement agreement
- 1.2.3 Transfer agreement
- 1.3.2 AAR-PTC Interchange Agreement
- 1.3.1 PTC Agreement
- 1.3.4 Electrification Agreement

Clem's blog paraphrases the UPRR/Caltrain agreement pretty well:

1. The [agreement](#) recently entered into by Caltrain and Union Pacific, stipulating that:
  - o UP will start looking for a new short line freight service provider.
  - o Caltrain will ensure that short line locomotives with freight PTC can operate throughout CBOSS territory, a condition described as "unconstrained interoperability," a great pretext for more [CBOSS program blowouts](#)
  - o Caltrain will ensure that Caltrain rolling stock can operate on UP's freight PTC equipped Gilroy branch, or cease operating on the Gilroy branch.
  - o Caltrain agrees to never electrify UP's Main Track 1 from CP Coast (Santa Clara) through San Jose to [CP Lick](#) (south of Tamien), the land under which Caltrain owns.
  - o UP agrees not to object to the [CPUC safety requirements \(1.4 MB PDF\)](#) formally adopted on 10 November 2016 for Caltrain's electrification project.
  - o UP allows Caltrain's SSF station reconfiguration project to proceed, trading some old yard tracks and a loading dock for \$2 million plus a new Caltrain-funded freight yard track at Newhall in Santa Clara.
  - o UP settles some old claims by Caltrain for track maintenance.
2. In the coming months,
  - o UP will select a Short Line and obtain Caltrain's approval.
  - o Caltrain will sign a new trackage rights agreement with the short line.
  - o Caltrain will sign a new trackage rights agreement with UP that replaces [the current trackage rights agreement](#), concerning the "South Terminal Area" around San Jose.
  - o The [Surface Transportation Board](#) will hopefully approve the whole deal, which is the entry criterion into phase 3.

3. Upon STB approval,
  - o Caltrain will own the "common carrier" obligations and be on the hook legally and financially for abandonment of freight service, should that ever be contemplated.
  - o The Short Line will own the common carrier obligations on the sidings and lead tracks not owned by Caltrain.
  - o UP will transfer to Caltrain the rights for intercity passenger service north of CP Coast in Santa Clara, but not south of there.
  - o UP will agree not to pursue legal action against the electrification project.

To clarify Clem's points a bit and highlight our concerns:

**#1 - CBOSS :** This agreement seems to require that Caltrain continue to develop CBOSS and if they fail to do so by a certain date (which seems highly likely), Caltrain agrees to not go to Gilroy anymore.

Also, note, UPRR agrees not to pursue legal action if and only if, Phases 1-3 of this deal are completed.

### **#2 - What's not in the contract**

The contract says nothing about changing the freight requirements along the Peninsula (specifically the steepness of the grade and the height clearances).

Simply put, we may have just lost our chance to negotiate for steeper grades (from 1% to 2% or more) which significantly lowers the cost of grade seps (in Palo Alto alone, the Hatch Mott study showed the difference between 1% and 2% to change cost from \$1billion for grade sep to \$500 million).

One could make the argument that when UP selects a 3rd party operator, we could have influence over the RFP process, but the contract makes it clear that Caltrain must, within reason, agree to whomever UP chooses. And if we try to change track conditions, they will likely say we're changing the conditions on the corridor - so we don't see that as a feasible solution.

### **#3 - How did this happen without input?**

We are concerned that the Caltrain staff involved simply don't have enough technical expertise to understand the ramifications of what they signed and they lack the political expertise to understand why cities on the corridor might have other things to add to this type of agreement.

I've attached the "Tolling Agreements" which apparently Caltrain STAFF had executed with Union Pacific back in 2015 and has been updating until this deal was reached.

In case you don't know, a tolling agreement allows an entity to retain the right to sue (in this case on the electrification EIR) while they try to negotiate. In these agreements, UPRR retained its right to sue on the Caltrain electrification EIR.

These agreements were entered into on a STAFF level and were never (to our knowledge) revealed to the board. They were also never made public. That means that even through the RFP and contracting of electrification, no one knew that UPRR had preserved their right to sue...

The public certainly did not know that litigation was potentially eminent since a tolling agreement was in place or we would have provided extensive comments on what kinds of things the community would like to see if we were negotiating with Union Pacific in any real way.

My guess is all the cities would have chimed in with the same feedback - namely that we want flexibility on the "freight requirements" of a 1% grade and certain height clearances that directly impact the costs of grade separations.

Importantly, this doesn't seem to have been a Brown Act violation. Depending on Caltrain's internal rules around contracting, the Caltrain Staff may have had the authority to enter into Tolling Agreements without the approval of the board. They also may have discretion to enter into an agreement to settle potential litigation relating to those tolling agreements without letting the board know (within certain parameters). The board was informed of the decision in the closed session. If they had VOTED on the decision in closed session - it was a Brown Act violation.



I'm in the process of getting confirmation of what, exactly, happened in that session.

## **#4 - Process**

From a policy perspective, we have the following concerns:

- Staff does not have the technical and/or political expertise to have entered into this agreement
- Withholding this information from the board means staff allowed the board to enter into agreements with third parties without knowing critical information about potential lawsuits (which seems counter to the spirit of a board, but also raises significant fiduciary responsibilities)
- The cities interests along the corridor have not been ultimately represented by Caltrain's staff.
- Did withholding information about the tolling agreements from the board and the public actually increase UP's negotiating leverage?
- Why do the monthly CalMod update reports fail to mention litigation as a significant project risk?

## **#5 - Now what?**

How do we get Caltrain board to understand the ramifications of this deal? What recourse does the board have if they agree that staff entered into an unfavorable agreement? How can we resolve this?

Even if we get the FTA money for electrification, we are concerned this agreement is so flawed, it puts the entire Caltrain system at a significant disadvantage going forward. Not to mention it potentially significantly increases the costs of grade seps throughout the corridor.

This deal actually seems worse than the current trackage rights agreement from 1991 which I mentioned in the background above (see attached highlighted sections on page 29-30) which seems to indicate if Caltrain changes conditions on the corridor (electrification), it has the right to kick UP off the corridor.

FYI, there is a Caltrain board meeting this Thursday.

## **Action Items/Policy questions**

a) Rail Committee/LPMWG

It is our understanding that Mayor Scharff is on the Caltrain Local Policy Maker Working Group and that Councilmember Tanaka is the alternate.

It is our request that the alternate for the Rail committee be changed to be a standing member of the Palo Alto Rail Committee. The depth of knowledge and the ability to understand the nuance of those meetings is essential to Palo Alto's ability to be well represented and a council member that does not follow the detail presented at the Palo Alto Rail Committee will be much less effective as a member of the LPMWG.

b) Palo Alto should deliberate whether the ramifications of this agreement warrant an objection, with the understanding that the situation around federal funding of electrification is a delicate situation given what's currently going on in the Trump administration. We might need input from the City Attorney to understand what options (if any) we have to rectify the situation if we deem it necessary.

c) We recommend this issue be agendized for the upcoming Rail Committee Meeting. We're happy to present our concerns at the Rail Committee meeting formally if that would be helpful.

Thanks in advance for your attention to this issue. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Nadia

Nadia Naik  
CARRD  
[www.calhsr.com](http://www.calhsr.com)



January 24, 2017

DELIVERED BY EMAIL

*Port of Redwood City*  
*Port of San Francisco*  
*Seaport Industrial Association*  
*San Francisco Bay Railroad*  
*SF Chamber of Commerce*  
*SF Dept. of the Environment*  
*ILWU Local 10*  
*BAE Systems SF Ship Repair*  
*Calstone*  
*CEMEX*  
*Central Concrete*  
*Clean Harbors Environmental*  
*Darling International*  
*Dean's Services*  
*Graniterock*  
*Lehigh Hanson*  
*Lyngso Garden Materials*  
*Marine Highways, LLC*  
*METRO Ports*  
*Operating Engineers Local 3*  
*Pacific Agri-Products*  
*Peninsula Building Materials*  
*Pine Cone Lumber*  
*Sheedy Drayage Co.*  
*Sierra Point Lumber*  
*Sims Metal Management*  
*South City Lumber*  
*Summit Signal*  
*The Pasha Group*  
*Unilever*  
*Univar*  
*Waste Solutions Group*

California Freight Advisory Committee  
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
3331 North First Street, Bldg. B  
San Jose, CA 95134-1927

**Re: Freight Rail in the South Bay Area Region**

Dear Members of the CFAC:

The Peninsula Freight Rail Users Group (PFRUG) offers the following comments on item 3 of your agenda: Overview of Goods Movement in the South Bay Area Region.

PFRUG members include the freight rail shippers on the Caltrain corridor, the two public ports on the San Francisco Bay Peninsula (San Francisco and Redwood City), and business and labor stakeholders. We have participated actively in the planning process for Caltrain modernization and California High Speed Rail (HSR) over many years, giving input to the Peninsula Rail Program, the Caltrain Modernization Project, the California High Speed Rail Authority, the Bay Area Goods Movement Collaborative, and the State Rail Plan.

As you consider the future of rail service regionally and statewide, we urge you to take into account the complementary and mutually reinforcing benefits of moving people and goods by rail. There is a vital public interest in preserving the viability of freight rail service on the Peninsula, which generates high-quality jobs and significantly reduces traffic congestion and air pollution.

Over the past decade, roughly 20,000–30,000 loaded rail cars have carried 2-3 million tons of cargo on the Caltrain corridor each year. This is the equivalent of at least 100,000 truck trips annually, cargo that is now moved by night that would otherwise add to traffic congestion during the day. In peak years the numbers are substantially higher, emphasizing the need to plan for the future.



November 3, 2010

Open Letter to Cities on the Peninsula re: High Speed Rail and Freight Rail

Dear City Leaders,

The Peninsula Freight Rail Users Group (PFRUG) would like to comment briefly on the issue of freight rail compatibility with high speed rail (HSR), to share information you might find useful as you participate in the public process around this project.

- Port of Redwood City*
- Port of San Francisco*
- Seaport Industrial Association*
- San Francisco Bay Railroad*
- SF Chamber of Commerce*
- SF Dept. of the Environment*
- ILWU Local 10*
- BAE Systems*
- Basic Chemical Solutions*
- Calstone*
- CEMEX*
- Clean Harbors Environmental*
- Darling International*
- Dean's Services*
- Graniterock*
- Lehigh Hanson*
- Lyngso Garden Materials*
- Marine Highways, LLC*
- Metro Ports*
- Operating Engineers Local 3*
- Pacific Agri-Products*
- Peninsula Building Materials*
- Pine Cone Lumber*
- Sheedy Drayage Co.*
- Sierra Point Lumber*
- Sims Metal Management*
- South City Lumber*
- Summit Signal*
- The Pasha Group*
- Unilever*
- Waste Solutions Group*

- Diesel trains can and do operate successfully on tracks of greater than one percent grade;
- Diesel trains can and do operate successfully in tunnels or covered trenches with proper ventilation;
- It is possible to electrify freight trains and have them share the same overhead contact system as electrified passenger trains;
- The HSR Supplemental Alternatives Analysis does not identify freight trains as the reason that below-grade options were eliminated for further study along much of the Peninsula. Instead, it asserts multiple reasons, most of which are unrelated to freight: “The Covered Trench/tunnel option is impracticable due to major constructability issues, surface disruption to surface land uses, additional right-of-way requirements, much greater construction risk, high cost factors, and lengthy construction schedules and construction impacts. The Covered Trench/Tunnel option also has a greater ROW requirement for construction than the Open Trench option and requires significant ventilation and life safety features.” (page 4-16)

Beyond these technical issues, PFRUG offers a vision of freight and passenger rail that maximizes the economic, environmental, and revenue-generating potential of each.

- We encourage both Caltrain and Union Pacific to consider a short line operator for freight service on the Peninsula. We believe freight rail volume on the Peninsula can expand several times over without compromising passenger service.
- We insist that current regulations mandating a height of at least 22.5 feet for overhead electrical lines be maintained in order to preserve freight capacity. If “off the shelf” train technology from other countries does not meet this standard, PFRUG believes that we should expect adaptations from foreign vendors or aspire to domestic production of technology that meets our needs.

We hope you find these comments helpful.

Sincerely,

Greg Greenway



**DELIVERED BY E-MAIL**

November 3, 2010

Roelof van Ark  
Chief Executive Officer  
California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA)  
925 L Street, Suite 1425  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Freight rail compatibility with covered trenches and tunnels**

Dear Mr. van Ark:

This letter is in response to recent news reports about your meeting with leaders of several Peninsula cities on October 21. According to the reports, the Authority takes the position that covered trenches and tunnels will be studied on only a limited basis in the project EIR because freight trains cannot feasibly run underground for extended distance. We certainly appreciate the agency's continued commitment to preserve freight rail on the Caltrain corridor. At the same time, the Peninsula Freight Rail Users Group (PFRUG) believes that this specific stance, at least as described in the media, gives an inaccurate representation of freight's impact on policy choices, and of the Authority's full rationale for ruling out below-grade alternatives.

It is technically feasible to operate freight trains in covered trenches and tunnels. It is done successfully in this country and elsewhere. The need for ventilation is real, but the policy issue concerns the cost and impacts of below-grade options compared with their relative benefits. It is a simplification to say that ventilation for freight trains accounts for the entire cost differential between below-grade and above-grade options, or that freight rail is the reason the Authority cannot consider the alternatives that most Peninsula cities prefer.

PFRUG strongly encourages you to be clear with the public about all factors that account for the Authority's decision not to study more below-grade alternatives in the EIR. It is not a credible position to single out freight as the decisive factor in the agency's thinking, particularly after a year or more of public process during which this issue could have been thoroughly discussed. The Supplemental Alternatives Analysis itself cites multiple reasons – other than ventilation and life safety – why the agency considers covered trenches and tunnels “impractical” (in the “Options Not Carried Forward” discussion for Subsection 3A).

- Port of Redwood City*
- Port of San Francisco*
- Seaport Industrial Association*
- San Francisco Bay Railroad*
- SF Chamber of Commerce*
- SF Dept. of the Environment*
- ILWU Local 10*
- BAE Systems*
- Basic Chemical Solutions*
- Calstone*
- CEMEX*
- Clean Harbors Environmental*
- Darling International*
- Dean's Services*
- Graniterock*
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- Lyngso Garden Materials*
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- South City Lumber*
- Summit Signal*
- The Pasha Group*
- Unilever*
- Waste Solutions Group*



- Port of Redwood City*
- Port of San Francisco*
- Seaport Industrial Association*
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- SF Chamber of Commerce*
- SF Dept. of the Environment*
- ILWU Local 10*
- BAE Systems*
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- Sims Metal Management*
- South City Lumber*
- Summit Signal*
- The Pasha Group*
- Unilever*
- Waste Solutions Group*

We believe it is inappropriate to eliminate below-grade alternatives from the EIR based on an inaccurate assertion that freight rail rules out these options. Indeed, it is precisely through further study that the questions of below-grade costs, impacts, and compatibility with freight can be transparently vetted and fully understood. With further study, the agency might even consider electrifying freight service on the Peninsula. PFRUG does not advocate any particular vertical alignment, although we are sympathetic to community desires on the Peninsula to continue to study alternatives that are technically feasible.

PFRUG also requests that the CHSRA establish a period for public comment on the project EIR of no less than 90 days, rather than the legally required minimum of 45 days. If the agency releases the EIR for comment in December, a 45-day review period would fall during the end-of-year holiday season when many offices are closed, and boards and committees often do not meet. An extended public comment period will increase the likelihood that all interested parties have an adequate opportunity to inform themselves, and that that the resulting document is the result of comprehensive and balanced analysis.

PFRUG remains a proponent of high speed rail. We appreciate your consideration of these comments in the interest of promoting a process that builds public confidence in the project, and that expresses the complementary benefits of passenger and freight rail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Greenway". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Greg Greenway  
Peninsula Freight Rail Users Group

Cc: Robert Doty, Director, Peninsula Rail Program  
Michael Scanlon, Executive Director, Caltrain

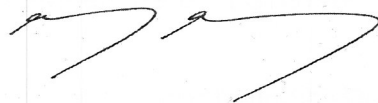
## Planning and Transportation Public Comment 3-14-18

For the record, Caltrain's commitments regarding freight rail include the following statements in its Strategic Plan 2015-2024:

- “(T)he agency must work with local and regional transit providers as well as passenger and freight rail operators to ensure the smooth flow of people and goods through the corridor. (p. 18)
- (T)he Caltrain right-of-way provides the only freight rail access to the Peninsula and San Francisco. The use of the corridor for freight fulfills a critical goods movement function in a socially and environmentally responsible way and the agency will sustain its efforts to partner with freight users and smoothly integrate freight and commuter rail operations. While Caltrain faces a finite corridor capacity and a complex regulatory environment, the agency will strive to address these challenges in a collaborative and transparent manner with its rail partners. (p. 18)
- Continue to accommodate freight and passenger tenants whose operations are compatible with Caltrain and blended system service, and support compatibility between passenger and freight service to the extent possible. (p. 19)
- Caltrain is committed to accommodating freight on its corridor along with its other existing tenants. (p. B5)
- Staff has added additional language to Focus Area 5 of the plan narrative to emphasize the value Caltrain places on its partnership with the freight providers who use its corridor. (p. B5)
- The corridor also plays an important role in goods movement, with Union Pacific providing freight services to customers along the San Francisco Peninsula. (p. A3)
- At the regional and local level, Caltrain must work to sustain its partnerships with existing tenant rail services that use the Peninsula Corridor, including both freight and passenger services.” (p. 6)

PFRUG appreciates your work to plan for the future of rail in California, and the fact that public agencies are taking a more integrated approach to the movement of goods and people by rail. Freight and passenger service are certainly compatible on the shared corridor, and we look forward to contributing to a world-class system that serves both.

Sincerely,



Greg Greenway  
Executive Director

**From:** [Pat Marriott](#)  
**To:** [council@losaltosca.gov](mailto:council@losaltosca.gov)  
**Cc:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Weiner's more onerous bill: S-828  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 20, 2018 9:10:54 AM

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<https://marinpost.org/blog/2018/2/16/wieners-even-more-onerous-senate-bill-828>

SB 828 is about "housing quotas." Housing advocates such as the YIMBYs are hoping that with all attention on 827, Senate Bill 828 will slip under the radar. Like Senate Bill 827, Senate Bill 828 demonstrates all the understanding of a child applying over-simplified logic when it comes to planning:

To illustrate the significance of SB 35 historically, 97.6% of California cities did not meet their full RHNA goals. Only 13 cities (2.4%) met their goals making them exempt from SB 35 streamlining.

**SB 828 dramatically increases RHNA quotas**

The ramifications of not meeting quotas are that all local and environmental review can be bypassed, and market rate development can occur with as little as just 10% affordable units when quotas aren't met.



**From:** [Pat Marriott](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Smart growth not smart in Portland  
**Date:** Sunday, February 18, 2018 7:16:03 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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**From:** Pat Marriott [mailto:patmarriott@sbcglobal.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 18, 2018 7:11 PM  
**To:** City Council (city.council@cityofpaloalto.org)  
**Subject:** Smart growth not smart in Portland

Council Members:

There's a lot of talk about "smart" growth, but I hope we can learn from places who have tried it and discovered it's not all it's made out to be.

Pat Marriott

### **Smart Growth Not Smart in Portland**

Portland has been on the forefront of Smart Growth movement. It has invested greatly in bicycle infrastructures and light rail lines. It has concentrated density in Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). The following two articles from Cascade Policy Institute did a reality check on whether Smart Growth succeeded or not.

- [Portlands' Regional Transit Strategy is Not Working, December 6, 2016, By John A. Charles, Jr.](#)
- [What Can Be Learned from Portland Smart Growth Experience?, February 10, 2016, By John A. Charles, Jr.](#)

Surprisingly, the two articles by John A. Charles, Jr. point out that after 20 years of Smart Growth, Smart Growth is not so smart in Portland:

- **"The share of all commute trips taken by public transit fell 17% during the past year.** The transit share of all Portland commute trips peaked in 2008 at 15%. Since then it has hovered near 12%, and now rests at 10%." (This is after adding four new light rail lines, commuter rail and streetcar and an investment of \$6.3 billion dollars)
- There is only about 10% drop in SOV (single-occupancy vehicle) and about 5% and 4% increase in those who bike or walk respectively.
- "On the land-use front, planners have succeeded in their goal of densifying the region; but there was collateral damage. Due to density regulations, buildable land is now scarce, driving up the cost of housing. This is incentivizing many property owners to tear down nice homes and replace them with out-of-scale apartment buildings – many with no off-street parking. **Some Portland Progressives who supported this planning agenda now wonder why their formerly pleasant neighborhoods are flooded with automobiles.**"
- "In the suburbs, most new projects simply have no backyards." There is no room for kids. "Most dwellings will be attached units on tiny lots. The larger parcels – averaging only 7,000 square feet – are being marketed as lots for "executive housing." "Nice backyards that were once common are now only available to the rich, due to the artificial scarcity of land that Smart Growth calls for.

Another article "[The Evolving Urban Form: Portland](#)", [August 3, 2013](#), By Wendell Cox pointed out the following:

- "Portland has developed an extensive rail system, intended to attract drivers from their cars. Yet the share of commuters using transit **has fallen** by a quarter since 1980, the last data available before the first light rail line opened. In short, rail has not changed the calculus of travel in Portland."
- Clinging to the fantasy transit can materially reduce automobile travel, Oregon officials have blocked substantial roadway expansions. Residents have been rewarded with **much intensified traffic congestion.**

The Texas A&M Texas Transportation Institute [Annual Mobility Report](#) (Note 4) reveals Portland to have **the 6th worst traffic congestion in the nation** among major metropolitan areas. This compares to a





## Planning and Transportation Public Comment 3-14-18

This was part of a longer-term decline in transit use. The transit share of all Portland commute trips peaked in 2008 at 15%. Since then it has hovered near 12%, and now rests at 10%.

Taxpayers should be especially concerned about the negative correlation between passenger rail construction and market share. In 1997, when the region had only one light rail line—the Blue line to Gresham—transit market share was 12%.

After extending the Blue line to Hillsboro and adding four new lines plus the WES commuter rail and the Portland Streetcar, transit market share is only 10%.

### Travel Mode Share for Weekday Commuting

#### Portland citywide, 1997-2016

Mode	1997	2000	2004	2008	2010	2012	2014	2015	2016
<b>SOV</b>	71%	69%	72%	65%	62%	61%	63%	60%	61%
<b>Carpool</b>	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	6%	6%	5%	6%
<b>Transit</b>	12%	14%	13%	15%	12%	12%	11%	12%	10%
<b>Bike</b>	3%	3%	4%	8%	7%	7%	8%	7%	8%
<b>Walk</b>	5%	5%	3%	4%	6%	7%	8%	9%	9%
<b>Other</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7%	6%	6%	7%	7%

*Source: Portland Auditor, Annual Community Survey*

The numbers cited above are for *citywide* travel patterns. When broken out by sector, the Auditor found that just 5% of all commuters in Southwest Portland took transit to work in 2016. Despite this lack of interest by commuters, TriMet and Metro are working to gain approval for another light rail line extension from Portland State University through SW Portland to Bridgeport Village. The likely construction cost will be around \$2.4 billion.

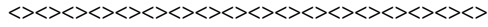
Unfortunately, there is no empirical basis for thinking that cannibalizing current bus service with costly new trains would have any measurable effect on transit use.

Transit advocates like to claim that we simply need to spend more money to boost ridership, but we've already tried that. TriMet's annual operating budget went up from \$212.2 million in 1998 to \$542.2 million in 2016. After adjusting for inflation, that's an increase of 72%. Those increases were on top of construction costs for rail, which cumulatively exceeded \$3.6 billion during that era.

It's time to stop the myth-making and start holding public officials accountable for a plan that isn't working.

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*John A. Charles, Jr. is President and CEO of Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.*



What Can Be Learned from Portland Smart Growth Experience?, February 10, 2016, By John A. Charles, Jr.  
<http://cascadepolicy.org/blog/2016/02/10/what-can-be-learned-from-portlands-smart-growth-experience/>

The annual “New Partners for Smart Growth” conference opens in Portland on Thursday, February 11. “Smart Growth” refers to an amorphous planning theory favoring (or requiring) high urban densities, mixed-use development, and non-auto travel.

Given Portland’s status as the Mecca for this philosophy, it’s likely that the conference will be a love fest of planners, activists, and consultants celebrating the “Portland story.” Unfortunately, the reality of Smart Growth is a lot less glamorous than the PowerPoint slides.

For example, Portland has been a leader in light rail construction for over 30 years, but it hasn’t changed how people travel. According to the Portland City Auditor, in 1997 – when Portland had only one light rail line terminating in Gresham – 12% of Portland commuters took transit.

In 2015, transit use was still only 12% of commuter travel, despite (or because of) a multi-billion rail construction campaign that added a streetcar loop, a new commuter rail line, and five new light rail lines. During that era bus service was reduced by 14%, and buses still account for two-thirds of daily riders.

On the land-use front, planners have succeeded in their goal of densifying the region; but there was collateral damage. Due to density regulations, buildable land is now scarce, driving up the cost of housing. This is incentivizing many property owners to tear down nice homes and replace them with out-of-scale apartment buildings – many with no off-street parking. Some Portland Progressives who supported this planning agenda now wonder why their formerly pleasant neighborhoods are flooded with automobiles.

In the suburbs, most new projects simply have no backyards. It’s hard to remember now, but in 1995, the average lot size for a new home in Washington County was 15,000 square feet. This provided plenty of room for kids.

Those days are over. In the new “South Hillsboro” development, which will be built out over the next decade, most dwellings will be attached units on tiny lots. The larger parcels – averaging only 7,000 square feet – are being marketed as lots for “executive housing.”

Nice backyards that were once common are now only available to the rich, due to the artificial scarcity of land that Smart Growth calls for.

The Portland conference will feature trips to “transit-oriented developments” (TODs) like Orenco Station in Hillsboro. Orenco features a housing project with passive solar design along with urban-scale density near light rail, but both elements required large public subsidies. It would be difficult to replicate those projects elsewhere.

Perhaps the most disappointing fact about regional planning in Portland is that very little effort is being made to learn from the experience. Since 2008, at least four audit reports by the Metro Auditor have criticized agency planners for this failure.

In the 2010 report, the Auditor found that *“Metro’s processes to plan transportation projects in the region were linear when they should have been circular. After a plan was adopted, the update process began anew with **little or no reflection about the effectiveness of the previous plan** or the results of the performance measures they contained.”*

## Planning and Transportation Public Comment 3-14-18

It's clear that this was not an accident; it was by design. As the Auditor noted, *"systems to collect data and measure progress towards these outcomes were not in place."*

No measurement means no accountability. That's not a smart way to plan a region.

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*John A. Charles, Jr. is President and CEO of Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.*



## Planning and Transportation Public Comment 3-14-18

**From:** [Tirumala Ranganath](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda item 4 Planning and transportation commission Regular Meeting February 14  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 14, 2018 7:11:23 PM

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Planning and Transportation Commission,

I write urging you not to recommend to the city council to adopt the proposed ordinance that would add a new AHCD 18.30(K). The AHDC fails to meet the goals that it claims to address and any zoning changes should have been allowed to be studied and commented on by interested public parties, especially those that are going to be impacted severely by it, viz. neighbors? As far as I can tell from a short reading (I just returned from an overseas trip), The AHCD does not fall within the scope the city's Comprehensive Plan EIR that was adopted by the city council not too long ago in November last year!

The proposal gets it wrong on so many fronts that it would be a travesty to try and ram it through by recommending it to the city council for passage. Among the glaring assumptions that are being asserted is the suggestion that El Camino Real has adequate transportation. I wonder if anyone on this planning commission has tried to take 22 or its Express version for regular commute, to say Santa Clara - I am pretty sure they have not. Sweeping zoning changes on the scale being pushed by the planning commission's agenda item 4 (for this evening), shouldn't even be talked about with such short public notice, one wonders whose interests are being served and at what price to the concerned neighbors of the Ventura Neighborhood. This is a bad precedent and a confidence destroying move on the part of the commission.

Given the short notice and the seriousness of what is being proposed, I urge you to not go forward with recommending it to the city council for consideration/passage. Thanks for hearing me out.

Sincerely,

T.R. Ranganath

(A long time [36 years and counting]  
resident as well as a potentially badly  
affected Ventura Neighborhood resident).