

Planning & Transportation Commission Emails 1-10-18

From: [John Kelley](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Letter (PDF and text) re Agenda Item 2, "Study Session to Review the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Implementation and Discuss Potential Future Amendments"
Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 4:35:43 PM
Attachments: [PA-PTC-letter to PTC re ADUS 2018-01-10.pdf](#)

John Kelley



Palo Alto, CA 94301

jkelly@399innovation.com



January 10, 2018

Via Email: Planning.Commission@CityofPaloAlto.org

Honorable Ed Lauing, Chair

Honorable Susan Monk, Vice Chair

Honorable Planning and Transportation Commissioners

City of Palo Alto

250 Hamilton Avenue

Palo Alto CA 94301

Re: January 10, 2018, Agenda Item 2, "Study Session to Review the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Implementation and Discuss Potential Future Amendments"

Dear Chair Lauing, Vice Chair Monk, and Planning and Transportation Commissioners,

Due to prior commitments, I will not be able to attend tonight's Planning and

Transportation Commission meeting, but I urge you to take specific action regarding Agenda Item 2, “Study Session to Review the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Implementation and Discuss Potential Future Amendments,” specifically regarding section B, “Bonus Lot Coverage and Floor Area for Attached and Detached ADUs” (“Section B”), beginning at p. 3/71, in the “Update on Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Implementation” (“ADU Update”).[\[1\]](#)

1. I urge you to choose alternative 2 presented by the City Staff regarding Section B, namely, to “[m]odify the code to specifically allow the bonuses for any ADU development, whether in conjunction with the new or existing home.” There is no principled basis for distinguishing between existing and new homes with regard to the lot coverage and FAR rules. Indeed, especially as articulated by both Mayor Kniss and City Manager Keene at the City Council meeting on Monday night, increasing housing in our community is of vital importance.
2. In addition, for essentially the same policy reasons --- that there is no principled basis for distinguishing between existing and new construction with regard to ADUs when our community urgently needs substantial amounts of new housing --- I urge you to make an additional clarification in the same section of the ADU ordinance discussed in Section B. Section 18.42.040(a)(4)(B)(i), as set forth in the ADU Update, states:

Lot Coverage. When the *development* of an accessory dwelling unit on a parcel with an existing single family residence would result in the parcel exceeding the lot coverage requirement, the accessory dwelling unit shall not be included in the calculation of lot coverage applicable to the property, so long as the parcel meets the underlying zoning district's minimum lot size requirement or is substandard by no more than ten percent (10%) of the underlying zoning district's minimum lot size requirement. (Emphasis added.)

Although I do not believe City Staff has yet encountered this problem, and while I do not believe it was the intention of the City Council, one potential problem with this language is that it *might* be interpreted improperly not to apply in the case of the conversion of an existing structure (e.g. an existing garage) into an accessory dwelling unit. Given the overall structure, language, and policy goals articulated in Section 18.42.040(a)(4) and the rest of the ADU ordinance, a reasonable person reading this language would believe that the word “development” does in fact include a development of an ADU resulting from the conversion of an existing structure. To avoid any misunderstanding, and to minimize the number of times that the Planning and Transportation Commission and the City Council will need to consider revisions to this section of the ADU ordinance, however, I urge the Planning and Transportation Commission to recommend the modification of the beginning of Section 18.42.040(a)(4)(B)(i) to read (addition in bold):

“When the development (**by new construction, the modification of an existing structure, or both**) of an accessory dwelling unit on a parcel with an existing single family residence...”

While that change makes a great deal of sense, if, for any reason, such a change would not be acceptable, then, at an absolute minimum, I urge the Planning and Transportation Commission to recommend the modification Section 18.42.040(a)(4)(B)(iii) so that a homeowner would be able to apply the 175 square foot bonus to either (a) the FAR or (b) the lot coverage ratio. If Section 18.42.040(a)(4)(B)(i) were somehow interpreted as not applying to the conversion of existing structures (which would be incorrect), homeowners, particularly those whose homes are

principally two-story structures, should not be penalized in creating new ADUs.

Thank you for your kind consideration of these concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

John Kelley

[1] See <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/62772>

From: [Elaine Uang](#)
 To: [Planning Commission](#)
 Subject: ADUs
 Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 1:58:29 PM

Dear Planning and Transportation Commissioners,

Thank you for taking up [a review of the ADU ordinance](#) six months after it has gone into effect. I am heartened to see that 14 ADUs have been permitted thus far, this is more than the previous annual average of 4 ADUs per year but I think we as a city can do more to encourage ADU construction.

The biggest barrier I am seeing in the community is cost. As an architect, I have worked with several clients to design ADUs, but the projects have not moved beyond design phase because of the high cost in today's construction climate (min \$150/square foot for conversions and \$300/square foot for new construction). I applaud exploring partnerships with Housing Trust Silicon Valley to develop low-cost loans or other financial incentives and urge you to prioritize this effort. The people who need ADUs most (for caretaking, income or family members) are often those who have the least cash on hand and do not wish to incur additional debt to finance an ADU. A loan program or cash benefit can help homeowners tremendously. Please also consider reducing current planning fees for ADUs to \$1000 or less. While planning fees for ADUs are less than single-family residential fees, they are still extremely high - \$9371, see below. By comparison, the planning fee for an ADU in Menlo Park is only \$700.

PLANNING IMPACT FEES - ADU	
<i>Fee Item</i>	<i>Fees</i>
Parks Impact Fee	\$3,926.00
Community Centers Impact Fee	\$1,021.00
Citywide Transportation Impact Fee	\$2,207.00
Public Safety Facilities Impact Fee	\$825.00
General Govt Facilities Impact Fee	\$1,039.00
Libraries Impact Fee	\$353.00
TOTAL	\$9,371.00

On top of planning fees ADU applicants in Palo Alto also have to pay building permit fees and school fees which are based on construction valuation and proposal size - a reduction of building permit fees by an additional 50% would be helpful. Another way to expedite building plan check of ADUs is to implement a program of 4-8 pre-permitted ADU prototypes. Many homeowners do not want to (or need to) go through a custom design process, and have asked about this as an option. Santa Cruz has done this and it has offered homeowners a measure of predictability in the permitting process.

I also would like to include some personal thoughts on the specifics points identified in the

staff report.

B. Bonus Lot Coverage - please allow this to apply to any ADU development, new construction or for an existing home.

C. Basements in ADUs - Language should be updated to allow habitable basement space in an ADU - the space would still have to comply with local zoning and state building code requirements to meet life safety reqs. When you build a basement bedroom you must provide adequate light and air and comply with egress requirements - regardless of whether it is part of the main house or part of an ADU.

D. Replacement of Noncomplying Structures - There are existing ADUs in non complying structures throughout Palo Alto. There should be a provision through a building inspection process to ensure adequate structural design and safe electrical, mechanical plumbing systems, or to allow homeowners the option to **upgrade** existing ADUs in noncomplying structures. It may not be cost effective for owners to demolish and replace such structures, and they are often already serving as important housing stock for community members.

E. Owner-Occupancy requirements - In my own neighborhood, there are many homes that are renter occupied with second units that are also rented. If 23% of single family homes are already rented, we should not exclude these homes as possible future second unit sites. This might further limit future supply and exacerbate our housing shortage.

F. Opt-Out provision - This should not be a priority for staff. With only 14 units in the pipeline it does not seem like time best spent trying to determine whether there should be an opt-out provision.

G. ADUs in the front of a home- An ADU in front of a home is a great idea, and actually a traditional community development model. A “duplex” feel is emblematic of missing middle housing, which is a much more diverse, affordable and historically compatible community design model .

H. 50% Rear Yard Coverage - A more traditional and useful site design pattern is to locate the ADU as far back as possible on site, just as rear garages were often sited as far back on the site to maximize open space between house and garage. I think the the 50% Rear Yard coverage is a hindrance, and actually limits site design options and creates awkward open space configurations on site. It should be expanded to 70%, and would still have to comply with overall lot coverage proportions

I. Streetside Setback Parking Replacement - this is a good place for parking, and should be added to the ordinance.

Respectfully,

Elaine Uang (writing as an individual with personal views)

Planning & Transportation Commission Emails 1-10-18

From: [Cervantes, Yolanda](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Gitelman, Hillary](#)
Subject: FW: Improvements to traffic light timing and rail network
Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 1:32:29 PM

Please see staff's response to Mr. Lund Snee below.

Yolanda M. Cervantes
Planning & Community Environment
City of Palo Alto
Yolanda.cervantes@cityofpaloalto.org
650.329.2404

From: Rius, Rafael
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 1:16 PM
To: jenslundsnee@alumni.stanford.edu
Cc: Mello, Joshua; Cervantes, Yolanda
Subject: RE: Improvements to traffic light timing and rail network

Hello Mr. Lund Snee,

Thank you for your email and detailed concerns.

I would like to discuss your concerns however your examples are pretty generalized. All of our signals with the exception of the downtown area (Lytton, University, and Hamilton) currently utilize a form of detection (i.e. sensors). We do have about three intersections, which are currently under construction. They are temporarily running without detection, but we hope that the repairs will be complete by February 2018. Of the other intersections, several corridors operate with coordinated timing and cycle lengths during the peak commute hours. This is to minimize overall total delay and emissions, but sometimes has the consequence of slightly longer than anticipated delays to the side streets or off-peak directions.

Your concern seems to be primarily for waiting at a signal while the other approaches are green with no vehicles. This may be planned along several of the arterial corridors to allow coordination between signals. Though there may be periods where the light is green for an extended time with no vehicles, this is typically done to maintain a "green band" for the peak volume directions, and is well proven to minimize the overall delay and versus a fully actuated signal system. I'd be happy to discuss in more detail if you want to discuss specific locations and corridors. Again, it may also be that you are experiencing this at one of our intersections that are under temporary construction.

The City of Palo Alto maintains approximately 100 traffic signals. There are about 30 additional traffic signals within Palo Alto that are maintained by Caltrans (along El Camino Real, i.e. State Route 82), and by the County of Santa Clara (along Oregon Expressway, Page Mill Road, and Foothill Expressway). Unfortunately we have no control over these intersections, but I believe they all use detection sensors and peak period coordination. As mentioned, El Camino Real is maintained by Caltrans, and does operation with both vehicle detection sensors AND a peak period coordinated timing program. We did hear similar complaints of delays along El Camino Real during the holiday

period. This lends us to believe that the signals along El Camino may have been operating with typical weekday plans while the traffic patterns were less than usual due to the holidays.

Again, please feel free to contact me directly to discuss specific locations in more detail.

Thank you,
Rafael



Rafael Rius, PTOE | Traffic Engineering Lead | P&CE Department
250 Hamilton Avenue | Palo Alto, CA 94301
T: 650.329.2305 | E: rafael.rius@cityofpaloalto.org

From: Jens-Erik Lund Snee [<mailto:jenslundsnee@alumni.stanford.edu>]
Sent: Thursday, January 04, 2018 8:03 AM
To: Planning Commission; Info, Plandiv
Cc: City Mgr
Subject: Improvements to traffic light timing and rail network

Dear Palo Alto Planning and Transportation Commissioners,

I am writing to request that you improve traffic efficiency in Palo Alto, especially the public transportation network and the astonishingly slow and outdated traffic light system. Traffic light sensors are widely deployed but they seem to be seldom used during most hours. May I inquire as to why this is the case? The benefits to safety, the economy, and City sustainability efforts that could be gained from smoother traffic flow would wildly exceed the fairly low costs of making more efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Traffic is a widespread source of frustration in Palo Alto. There's no doubt that the saturated traffic [decreases economic output](#). Slow travel [adds hardship](#) for hard-working people, who travel to Palo Alto and Stanford every day for work (but are unable to afford housing nearby due to some residents' refusal to allow construction of affordable housing). Moreover, packed roads and slow intersections cause traffic to spill into residential streets, which has, as you know, recently [sparked anger](#) among residents. (Yet certain residents resist sorely needed rail expansions that would reduce [congestion](#).)

I spent the holidays out of state. There, in areas with similar population density to Palo Alto, traffic sensors are routinely used in many intersections, and traffic flows much faster. When traffic lights are on timers, the timing is much better calibrated to the traffic patterns. Why is this not the case in the heart of Silicon Valley? Here, I am often astonished by how long I have to wait at some lights, often with no cars approaching the green light on the cross street. This is especially egregious on El Camino Real but it applies widely across and beyond Palo Alto.

I hope you register and embrace this comment, which is vigorously shared by countless others who call this area home.

Best,
Jens

Jens-Erik Lund Snee

jenseriklundsnee.com



Planning & Transportation Commission Emails 1-10-18

From: [Lait, Jonathan](#)
To: chynlay@yahoo.com
Cc: [Gitelman, Hillary](#); [Campbell, Clare](#); [Cervantes, Yolanda](#); [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: RE: ADU planning impact fees
Date: Tuesday, January 09, 2018 2:41:18 PM

Hi Chyn,

Thank you for your email. At present the development impact fees collected for new ADU units cannot be waived. These fees are set forth in the municipal code and would require an amendment to make the requested change. However, the Planning and Transportation Commission is considering possible changes to ADU regulations and the question of development impact fees will be explored.

Clare Campbell is the staff planner for this effort and is copied on this email. She can keep you updated as we present options to the City Council in the Spring/Summer.

The next meeting on this topic is this Wednesday, January 10 at 7pm. Please see the Commission agenda (<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/62773>) for additional information and thank you for your feedback.

Jonathan Lait



Jonathan Lait, AICP, Assistant Director
Planning and Community Environment Department
250 Hamilton Avenue | Palo Alto, CA 94301

Work: 650.329.2679

Email: jonathan.lait@cityofpaloalto.org

From: Planning Commission
Sent: Tuesday, January 09, 2018 2:07 PM
To: Cervantes, Yolanda <Yolanda.Cervantes@CityofPaloAlto.org>
Cc: Gitelman, Hillary <Hillary.Gitelman@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Lait, Jonathan <Jonathan.Lait@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Campbell, Clare <clare.campbell@cityofpaloalto.org>
Subject: FW: ADU planning impact fees

Forwarding from PTC mailbox.

BCCPTC

Yolanda M. Cervantes
Planning & Community Environment
City of Palo Alto

Yolanda.cervantes@cityofpaloalto.org

650.329.2404

From: Chyn Lay [<mailto:chynlay@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 09, 2018 12:43 PM

To: Planning Commission

Cc: Jen-Nan SBC

Subject: ADU planning impact fees

Hi,

I would like to know whether the city councils will consider to waive the ADU planning/environmental (?) impact fees as an incentive to home owners to build ADU?

As a home owner, we have a side yard that can be built as an ADU. But the planning impact fees is too high that force me to reconsider whether it's worth it. I hope the City can waive the fees to encourage the home owner to build ADU.

Could you please update me whether the planning impact fees can be waived?

Thank you.

Regards,
Chyn

From: [Chyn Lay](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Jen-Nan SBC](#)
Subject: ADU planning impact fees
Date: Tuesday, January 09, 2018 12:42:40 PM

Hi,

I would like to know whether the city councils will consider to waive the ADU planning/environmental (?) impact fees as an incentive to home owners to build ADU?

As a home owner, we have a side yard that can be built as an ADU. But the planning impact fees is too high that force me to reconsider whether it's worth it. I hope the City can waive the fees to encourage the home owner to build ADU.

Could you please update me whether the planning impact fees can be waived?

Thank you.

Regards,
Chyn

From: [Janice Li](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Re: Planning and Transportation Commission Study Session on Review and Implementation of ADU Ordinance
Date: Monday, January 08, 2018 3:53:02 PM

Hello,

I'd like to propose two amendments to the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance. I'm not sure if I can make the meeting because of work, but will try to attend.

The current allowance for an ADU over the maximum square feet per lot is 175 sq ft. I'd like to propose that the allowance be increased to 500 sq ft. Many houses are already built up to the maximum sq ft allowance and 175 additional sq ft is not adequate for an ADU. At most 175 sq ft would allow for one small room (13 x 13) with no bathroom or additional space. As an example, my house is currently 2,545 sq ft on a 6,000 sq ft lot. If the maximum allowed space was increased to 500 sq ft, that still leaves ample unused space on the lot. 500 sq ft is just an initial starting place for an increased allowance and is of course open to adjustment.

I would also like to propose to allow for two story detached ADUs. This will allow for more effective use of lot space since living space is increased with less footprint. Coupled with the first amendment, this would theoretically allow for 500 sq ft of additional living space on only a 250 sq ft footprint. Because the ADU would be in the backyard, it would not take away from the aesthetic of the neighborhood. Additionally, many houses in Palo Alto are already 2 stories so adding another 2 story unit in the backyard would not be so out of place, especially given that attached ADUs can be 2 stories.

Land is a precious resource in the Bay Area and given the housing crisis, it would be beneficial to more parties if the ADU allowance over the maximum floor size was increased. With the current rules, few people can actually build a functional ADU with their existing house.

Please correct me if I'm wrong in any of my assumptions. This is my first time submitting a comment so let me know if there are any additional steps I need to take for these comments to be seriously considered.

Thank you,

Janice Li

From: **Moitra, Chitra** <Chitra.Moitra@cityofpaloalto.org>
Date: Mon, Jan 8, 2018 at 9:52 AM
Subject: Planning and Transportation Commission Study Session on Review and Implementation of ADU Ordinance
To: "Campbell, Clare" <clare.campbell@cityofpaloalto.org>, "Moitra, Chitra" <Chitra.Moitra@cityofpaloalto.org>

Hello Everyone

This email serves to inform you that the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) will hold a study session on January 10, 2018 to review the implementation of the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance and provide comments on potential amendments that may be incorporated into a revised ordinance.

The PTC meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 pm on Wednesday January 10, and will be held at the Council Chambers, [250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301](#).

This item is # 2 on the agenda

[PTC Meeting Agenda January 10, 2018](#)

The staff report and the draft ordinance is available at:

[PTC Study Session Staff Report January 10, 2018](#)

There are many ways to share your ideas:

- you can either attend the Planning and Transportation Commission meeting on January 10, 2018 or
- email your comments to Planning.Commission@CityofPaloAlto.org

For more information on the Accessory Dwelling Unit Update, including public hearings, staff reports and to sign up for updates, please visit the project website:

http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/advance/accessory_dwelling_units_regulations_update.asp

Thank you

Chitra

Chitra Moitra

Planner

Planning and Community Environment Department

[250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301](#)

Email: chitra.moitra@cityofpaloalto.org

From: [Robert Killion](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: ADU Question
Date: Monday, January 08, 2018 10:23:57 AM

Hi,

I would like to convert our existing detached garage (280 sq ft) to an ADU, and proposed to add about 100 sq. ft. to accommodate a shower and kitchenette. The existing garage was built according to an approved plan in 2007, and has an existing and permitted toilet/sink half bath. The construction is modern and built to match the single story house (~1,400 sq. ft.) situated on a 5,000 sq. ft. lot. The garage is finished on the outside with stucco, and inside with insulation and drywall.

Although there was no issue with the FAR, I was informed by the development center that the ADU ordinance does not allow addition to an existing accessory building, and only allows conversion within the existing garage area. It is not practical to demolish the existing structure which is built to current code and is structurally sound.

Is it possible to reconsider the ADU ordinance to allow for additions to existing garages to accommodate the "spirit" of the ADU ordinance?

Rob

From: [Neilson Buchanan](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: San Francisco Peninsula Residents Newsletter
Date: Thursday, January 04, 2018 10:10:04 PM

Dear Councilpersons and Commissioners,

We welcome your response to our concerns expressed in the newsletter below. As we view the Peninsula landscape, our concern grows as each city creates new housing and job challenges to fragile transportation systems.

The recent Federal tax reforms now cloud voter acceptance for regional bond and sales tax funding. We urge Palo Alto City Council to factor the new tax law impact as you set priorities and budgets for the coming year.

Additionally we are urging each city council to tally up the costs, timelines and financing viability for the region's mega-transportation projects. We hope that your transportation assessment can be completed by mid-2018.

Thank you.

Neilson Buchanan
John Guislin
Palo Alto, CA 94301



cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: SFPNA - San Francisco Peninsula Neighborhood Association
<cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com@ccsend.com>
To: "cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com" <cnsbuchanan@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2018, 8:30:59 AM PST
Subject: The latest news for you



January 2, 2018



THIS WEEK ON THE SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA
News that Impacts Your Quality of Life

Quality for neighborhoods and work itself have been hallmarks of California's success. All of the Peninsula's communities are experiencing the benefits and pains of sustained growth. Articles selected for this newsletter reflect the editors' concern for quality of life in each town and city.

To Subscribe [Click Here](#)

Traffic Apocalypse 2018

"A traffic calamity of epic proportions is brewing in what was once a relatively innocuous intersection in San Mateo. And it's aiming to come to dire fruition in the guise of what is called "transit-oriented development, or TOD."

[SanJoseMercuryNews](#)

Ed. Comment: *San Mateo is not an isolated situation. Traffic congestion is an unacceptable symptom felt in every town and city. The politics for traffic solutions has become so desperate that critical thinking is being cast aside by elected officials and their city planning staff. Many assumptions about traffic mitigation cannot be validated. Some are just wishful thinking. Billions of dollars for over-lapping regional transportation projects are being stuffed into political pork barrels. Funding sources for the mega-projects are simply aspirational.*

SF Peninsula Residents Association

Editors' Pledge for 2018

During the upcoming year this newsletter will highlight efforts to improve traffic flow and safety. We will also shine a spotlight on projects that continue to degrade our quality of life.

- o How long is the commute to work?
- o How long are peak commute hours?
- o Which cities manage spillover traffic onto residential streets?
- o Which cities actually measure and manage traffic inside their borders?

We will also focus on the rationale behind the region's multi-billion dollar mega-transportation projects.

- o Are the timelines and funding sources realistic?
- o How much political pork is buried inside the mega-projects' billions of dollars?
- o Is political pork making traffic worse instead of better?
- o Where is the good news about traffic mitigation?

Mayors in Peninsula communities will soon be making their "Annual State of the City" speeches. Let's see if Mayors focus on rhetoric or solutions. Residents must ask the difficult questions, hold officials accountable, and remain focused on the key issues impacting our quality of life. City Councils, not Mayors, must ask their planning departments for predictive traffic analysis or face the political consequences for their failed stewardship.

We invite Peninsula newspapers and their readers to challenge their City Councils to deliver solutions that are FUNDED and MEASUREABLE. Moaning about the scope and size of vehicular congestion is counterproductive; residents must demand well-thought-out actions.

Success of SFPRA newsletter success depends upon its readers. Please feel free to forward the newsletter to your friends and neighbors. Ask them to subscribe at no cost by clicking the subscribe button above or by emailing cnsbuchanan@gmail.com.

Editors Neilson Buchanan and John Guislin are unpaid, private citizens on the SF Peninsula and have no ties to developers or government organizations.

Web Site and Social Media Coming Soon

Neilson Buchanan | Downtown North, Palo Alto, CA 94301

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Planning & Transportation Commission Emails 1-10-18

From: [Gitelman, Hillary](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#); [Cervantes, Yolanda](#)
Cc: [Lait, Jonathan](#); [Mello, Joshuah](#); [Rius, Rafael](#)
Subject: RE: Improvements to traffic light timing and rail network
Date: Thursday, January 04, 2018 5:18:38 PM

Thanks. Rafael, can you please draft a response for Josh's review?? I'd like to transmit it to this citizen and the PTC before the Commission meeting on Wednesday night.

Hillary



Hillary Gitelman | Planning Director | P&CE Department
250 Hamilton Avenue | Palo Alto, CA 94301
T: 650.329.2321 | E: hillary.gitelman@cityofpaloalto.org

Please think of the environment before printing this email – Thank you!

From: Planning Commission
Sent: Thursday, January 04, 2018 1:56 PM
To: Cervantes, Yolanda
Cc: Gitelman, Hillary; Lait, Jonathan; Mello, Joshuah; Rius, Rafael
Subject: FW: Improvements to traffic light timing and rail network

Forwarding from the PTC mailbox.

BCCPTC

Yolanda M. Cervantes
Planning & Community Environment
City of Palo Alto
Yolanda.cervantes@cityofpaloalto.org
650.329.2404

From: Jens-Erik Lund Snee [<mailto:jenslundsnee@alumni.stanford.edu>]
Sent: Thursday, January 04, 2018 8:03 AM
To: Planning Commission; Info, Plandiv
Cc: City Mgr
Subject: Improvements to traffic light timing and rail network

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Traffic is a widespread source of frustration in Palo Alto. There's no doubt that the saturated traffic [decreases economic output](#). Slow travel [adds hardship](#) for hard-working people, who travel to Palo Alto and Stanford every day for work (but are unable to afford housing nearby due to some residents' refusal to allow construction of affordable housing). Moreover, packed roads and slow intersections cause traffic to spill into residential streets, which has, as you know, recently [sparked anger](#) among residents. (Yet certain residents resist sorely needed rail expansions that would reduce [congestion](#).)

I spent the holidays out of state. There, in areas with similar population density to Palo Alto, traffic sensors are routinely used in many intersections, and traffic flows much faster. When traffic lights are on timers, the timing is much better calibrated to the traffic patterns. Why is this not the case in the heart of Silicon Valley? Here, I am often astonished by how long I have to wait at some lights, often with no cars approaching the green light on the cross street. This is especially egregious on El Camino Real but it applies widely across and beyond Palo Alto.

I hope you register and embrace this comment, which is vigorously shared by countless others who call this area home.

Best,
Jens

Jens-Erik Lund Snee
jenseriklundsnee.com



From: [Jens-Erik Lund Snee](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#); [Info, Plandiv](#)
Cc: [City Mgr](#)
Subject: Improvements to traffic light timing and rail network
Date: Thursday, January 04, 2018 8:03:10 AM

Dear Palo Alto Planning and Transportation Commissioners,

I am writing to request that you improve traffic efficiency in Palo Alto, especially the public transportation network and the astonishingly slow and outdated traffic light system. Traffic light sensors are widely deployed but they seem to be seldom used during most hours. May I inquire as to why this is the case? The benefits to safety, the economy, and City sustainability efforts that could be gained from smoother traffic flow would wildly exceed the fairly low costs of making more efficient use of existing infrastructure.

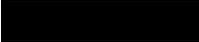
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Best,
Jens

Jens-Erik Lund Snee
jenseriklundsnee.com



Planning & Transportation Commission Emails 1-10-18

From: [Cervantes, Yolanda](#)
To: [Cervantes, Yolanda](#)
Cc: [Lait, Jonathan](#)
Subject: FW: The Great American Single-Family Home Problem - The New York Times
Date: Monday, December 18, 2017 9:22:42 AM

Good morning Commissioners,

Forwarding the link below on behalf of Commissioner Alcheck.

Regards,

Yolanda

BCCPTC

Yolanda M. Cervantes
Planning & Community Environment
City of Palo Alto
Yolanda.cervantes@cityofpaloalto.org
650.329.2404

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

From: Mike Alcheck [<mailto:malcheck@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2017 6:27 PM
To: Cervantes, Yolanda
Subject: The Great American Single-Family Home Problem - The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/01/business/economy/single-family-home.html>

Can you please distribute this link to this article to all the members of the commission.

Thank you,
Mike