

**From:** [Roberta Ahlquist](#)  
**To:** [Tom DuBois](#); [DuBois, Tom](#); [Lydia Kou](#); [Kou, Lydia](#); [Alison Cormack](#); [Cormack, Alison](#); [Greer Stone](#); [Stone, Greer](#); [Pat Burt](#); [Burt, Patrick](#); [Greg Tanaka](#); [Tanaka, Greg](#); [Filseth, Eric \(external\)](#); [Filseth, Eric \(Internal\)](#); [Council, City](#); [Shikada, Ed](#); [Human Relations Commission](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Joe Simitian](#); [Joe Simitian](#); [Josh Becker](#); [joshbbecke1@gmail.com](#); [Aram James](#); [Roberta Ahlquist](#); [WILPF Peninsula Palo Alto](#); [WILPF Peninsula Palo Alto](#); [mark weiss](#); [Mark Petersen-Perez](#); [Dave Price](#); [Bill Johnson](#); [Jesse Gary](#); [rebecca](#); [Angie, Palo Alto Renters Association](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Eric Filseth's one-line defense of the Mayor  
**Date:** Monday, May 3, 2021 5:27:03 PM

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

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It has become very clear that some of our elected council have little understanding of the role that social class plays. It is called intersectionality,

and you need to factor in race/class/ethnicity/gender/ability in your analysis. These ideas do not 'stand' alone in isolation. Please consider

educating yourselves regarding the role that all of these play in purchasing housing, among many other things.

Roberta Ahlquist,

Low-income Housing Committee, Women's International League for Peace & Freedom,  
Peninsula branch

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/local/article/Palo-Alto-s-housing-debate-is-a-battle-over-16142750.php?>

***“I think the majority of new homes being acquired in Santa Clara County are by Asian Americans,” DuBois said. “I don’t know how you say the zoning itself is exclusionary.”***

On Mon, May 3, 2021 at 12:45 PM Rebecca Eisenberg <[rebecca@winwithrebecca.com](mailto:rebecca@winwithrebecca.com)> wrote:

Responding publicly to Eric Filseth's defense of the Mayor, which was sent to me directly rather than to the group:

Eric writes:

On Sun, May 2, 2021 at 3:04 PM Eric Filseth <[efilseth@gmail.com](mailto:efilseth@gmail.com)> wrote:

| Data on this is publicly available if you know where to look. Eric

I respond:

Eric, I conduct research for a living. I have looked many places, including on paid databases that attorneys and legal researchers rely on for filing and defending cases related to civil rights and racial discrimination.

**From:** [Rebecca Eisenberg](#)  
**To:** [Tom DuBois](#); [DuBois, Tom](#); [Lydia Kou](#); [Kou, Lydia](#); [Alison Cormack](#); [Cormack, Alison](#); [Greer Stone](#); [Stone, Greer](#); [Pat Burt](#); [Burt, Patrick](#); [Greg Tanaka](#); [Tanaka, Greg](#); [Filseth, Eric \(external\)](#); [Filseth, Eric \(Internal\)](#); [Council, City](#); [Shikada, Ed](#); [Human Relations Commission](#); [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Who really owns most of our real estate?  
**Date:** Monday, May 3, 2021 12:59:08 PM

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

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Finally, it's easy to find a list of the actual largest owners of Silicon Valley. My favorite resource is the well-researched Mercury News article that can be found here:

<https://extras.mercurynews.com/whoowns/>

In sum, these giant corporations (and the white billionaires that control them) own most of our region, and many of these huge companies have been increasing their footprints in Palo Alto:

- 1 Stanford University
- 2 Apple
- 3 Google
- 4 Irvine Company
- 5 Jay Paul
- 6 Cisco Systems
- 7 Essex Property
- 8 Intel
- 9 Sobrato Organization
- 10 Prometheus

Not an Asian-American individual in the bunch.

Best,

Rebecca

On Mon, May 3, 2021 at 12:44 PM Rebecca Eisenberg <[rebecca@winwithrebecca.com](mailto:rebecca@winwithrebecca.com)> wrote:

Responding publicly to Eric Filseth's defense of the Mayor, which was sent to me directly rather than to the group:

Eric writes:

On Sun, May 2, 2021 at 3:04 PM Eric Filseth <[efilseth@gmail.com](mailto:efilseth@gmail.com)> wrote:

| Data on this is publicly available if you know where to look. Eric

I respond:

Eric, I conduct research for a living. I have looked many places, including on paid databases that attorneys and legal researchers rely on for filing and defending cases related to civil rights and racial discrimination.

Given the highly charged state of race relations and the urgent crisis of discrimination and violence against AAPI individuals, not to mention PACC's official commitment to end such bias and discrimination, one would think that the Mayor of a famous city would not make such a generalization without solid proof that his comments are true (query why a white mayor of a majority white city would make this statement altogether). If there is a source I am not aware of, at very least you should clarify which source, don't you think? "If you know where to look" is not a source.

On the other side of "where to look" are ample sources demonstrating the Mayor's comments to be based on racial bias rather than on facts. Perhaps the Mayor is confusing "rate of purchase" with "percentage of buyers?"

In other words, there is no evidence available that Asian-Americans make up MOST of home buyers in Santa Clara County, and there is a lot of evidence that they do not, including the Pew article and the LA Times article I cited and linked.

The closest I could find is that the RATE of Asian American purchases was increasing. And that they purchase at a higher **percentage** than non-Asians.

BUT Asian-Americans still are only approximately 1/3 of the population. They can purchase in higher percentages but that does not make them the majority of buyers. Even if every single AA bought a home -- which is not true -- it is still unlikely that they could comprise the majority of buyers. It's close to mathematically impossible.

Perhaps the Mayor is confusing rate of purchase with percentage of buyers?

Asian-Americans may purchase at a rate of 60% of their ethnic group overall (this is a made-up number to show you how the math works), but that 60% of AAs still cannot constitute a majority of buyers given that AAs are only 38% of the population. 60% of 38% equals 22.8%.

Or, perhaps the Mayor was conflating \*Asian American\* buyers with \*Asian\* buyers -- aka, buyers from outside the country? Although it is true that many purchasers of SCC land are Asian nationals, there is no evidence that Asian nationals, alternatively, purchase most of the available homes. (And BTW Asian-Americans generally do not appreciate being confused and/or conflated with Asian nationals.)

TL/DR Asian-Americans may be the largest ethnic group of buyers, and possibly (although unproven) they constitute a plurality of buyers, but it is highly unlikely that they make up the majority of buyers, and if they did, I am not sure if that data is available beyond, possibly, a list of "Asian sounding names."

This may seem like mincing words to you, but in a context of a known epidemic of violence against Asian-Americans, these types of unfounded remarks often fuel the fire of racial

violence. Given that this remark was out of place in the first place, I wonder why a Mayor would resort to race-based fear-mongering as a way (ironically) to argue that racism does not exist?

I ask you again to be more careful with your words. These types of generalizations fuel the very anti-AAPI violence and discrimination that you swore officially to fight against.

Best,  
Rebecca

**Rebecca L. Eisenberg Esq.**  
[www.linkedin.com/in/eisenberg](http://www.linkedin.com/in/eisenberg)  
[www.winwithrebecca.com](http://www.winwithrebecca.com)  
[rebecca@winwithrebecca.com](mailto:rebecca@winwithrebecca.com)  
415-235-8078

On Sun, May 2, 2021 at 3:04 PM Eric Filseth <[efilseth@gmail.com](mailto:efilseth@gmail.com)> wrote:

Data on this is publicly available if you know where to look. Eric

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**From:** Rebecca Eisenberg <[rebecca@winwithrebecca.com](mailto:rebecca@winwithrebecca.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 02, 2021 3:41 AM  
**To:** Tom DuBois <[tomforcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:tomforcouncil@gmail.com)>; [tom.dubois@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:tom.dubois@cityofpaloalto.org); Lydia Kou <[lydiakou@gmail.com](mailto:lydiakou@gmail.com)>; Kou, Lydia <[lydia.kou@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:lydia.kou@cityofpaloalto.org)>; Alison Cormack <[alisoncormack@gmail.com](mailto:alisoncormack@gmail.com)>; Alison Cormack <[alison.cormack@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:alison.cormack@cityofpaloalto.org)>; Greer Stone <[gstone22@gmail.com](mailto:gstone22@gmail.com)>; [greer.stone@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:greer.stone@cityofpaloalto.org); Pat Burt <[patburt11@gmail.com](mailto:patburt11@gmail.com)>; [pat.burt@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:pat.burt@cityofpaloalto.org); Greg Tanaka <[greg@gregtanaka.org](mailto:greg@gregtanaka.org)>; [greg.tanaka@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:greg.tanaka@cityofpaloalto.org); Eric Filseth <[efilseth@gmail.com](mailto:efilseth@gmail.com)>; Filseth, Eric (Internal) <[Eric.Filseth@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Eric.Filseth@cityofpaloalto.org)>; Council, City <[city.council@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.org)>; Shikada, Ed <[Ed.Shikada@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Ed.Shikada@cityofpaloalto.org)>; Human Relations Commission <[hrc@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:hrc@cityofpaloalto.org)>; Planning Commission <[Planning.Commission@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Planning.Commission@cityofpaloalto.org)>  
**Cc:** [susan@susanellenberg.com](mailto:susan@susanellenberg.com); Joe Simitian <[supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org](mailto:supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org)>; Joe Simitian <[joe.simitian@bos.sccgov.org](mailto:joe.simitian@bos.sccgov.org)>; Josh Becker <[becker.josh@gmail.com](mailto:becker.josh@gmail.com)>; [joshbecker1@gmail.com](mailto:joshbecker1@gmail.com); Aram James <[abjpd1@gmail.com](mailto:abjpd1@gmail.com)>; Roberta Ahlquist <[roberta.ahlquist@sjsu.edu](mailto:roberta.ahlquist@sjsu.edu)>; WILPF Peninsula Palo Alto <[wilpf.peninsula.paloalto@gmail.com](mailto:wilpf.peninsula.paloalto@gmail.com)>; WILPF Peninsula Palo Alto <[wilpfpeninsulapaloalto@gmail.com](mailto:wilpfpeninsulapaloalto@gmail.com)>; mark weiss <[earwopa@yahoo.com](mailto:earwopa@yahoo.com)>; Mark Petersen-Perez <[paloaltofreepress@gmail.com](mailto:paloaltofreepress@gmail.com)>; Dave Price <[price@padailypost.com](mailto:price@padailypost.com)>; Bill Johnson <[bjohnson@paweekly.com](mailto:bjohnson@paweekly.com)>; Jesse Gary <[jesse.gary@foxtv.com](mailto:jesse.gary@foxtv.com)>  
**Subject:** ""I think the majority of new homes being acquired in Santa Clara County are by Asian Americans," DuBois said. "I don't know how you say the zoning itself is exclusionary."

Dear Mayor Dubois,

I was confused and concerned by a (purported) factual assertion you made to the San Francisco Chronicle, because I fear it may reflect unconscious bias more than it reflects factual reality.

Specifically, you said:

[https://www.sfchronicle.com/local/article/Palo-Alto-s-housing-debate-is-a-battle-over-16142750.php?](https://www.sfchronicle.com/local/article/Palo-Alto-s-housing-debate-is-a-battle-over-16142750.php)

*“I think the majority of new homes being acquired in Santa Clara County are by Asian Americans,” DuBois said. “I don’t know how you say the zoning itself is exclusionary.”*

I wonder on what basis you concluded that most new homes are purchased by Asian Americans? I am not aware of any study that confirms your observation. Rather, available economic studies conclude that Asian Americans as a group have a lower rate of home ownership than non-minority groups. Pew Research provides a helpful overview of these matters:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/>

One of the most important points made by this Pew article (and all others on this topic) is the important point that "Asian Americans" are not a unitary group. There are dozens of countries in Asia from which Santa Clara county residents have emigrated. Like with all ethnic groups, immigrant communities range the socio-economic scale. Although there are some Asian-Americans who have succeeded in accumulating significant wealth, the truth is that there also are Asian-Americans who are poor and struggling, as with other minority (and otherwise historically excluded) groups. Decision Theory may attribute your remarks to a flawed yet very common bias in perception called the "representative heuristic." Under the theory of the representative heuristic, first introduced by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahnemann as part of their creation of Decision Theory (for which Dr. Kahnemann was awarded a Nobel Prize, which he would have shared with Dr. Tversky had Dr. Tversky still been alive at the time), the representative heuristic creates a misperception in the eyes of the beholder that "those they see" represent "those that are." In other words, when policy makers surround themselves only with the wealthy, they often have trouble even \*believing\* in the poor.

Here is an interesting article about Asian American homeownership, which also discusses the genuine harm and risk to safety that is created by the perpetuated of harmful stereotypes against minority groups such as Asian-Americans:

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2021-04-29/asian-americans-north-dakota>

There are innumerable reasons that you could have made that problematic remark about Asian-Americans buying the majority of available homes in Santa Clara County. But, given the lack of factual support for your comment, I wonder if any of those reasons reflects well on your capacity to represent Palo Alto, where Asian Americans (of every socio-economic level) represent a large, diverse, and vibrant percentage of our residents.

Being Mayor of a world-famous city like Palo Alto means that people listen to what you say, and believe that you speak the truth. This certainly was the case for the San Francisco Chronicle reporter, who did not fact-check any of your assertions, even when demonstrably false (such as the questionable assertions that Cupertino is behind Palo Alto on housing, and the disproven theories that multi-family housing (a) increases traffic and/or (b) reduces home values). Given the weight given to your remarks, It strikes me that a truly civil and responsible leader would work harder to choose his words more carefully.

I hope you will receive this email in the civil and constructive spirit in which it was sent. Feel free to call me at any time to discuss. 415-235-8078.

Warm regards,

Rebecca

On Sun, May 2, 2021 at 3:41 AM Rebecca Eisenberg <[rebecca@winwithrebecca.com](mailto:rebecca@winwithrebecca.com)> wrote:

Dear Mayor Dubois,

I was confused and concerned by a (purported) factual assertion you made to the San Francisco Chronicle, because I fear it may reflect unconscious bias more than it reflects factual reality.

Specifically, you said:

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***“I think the majority of new homes being acquired in Santa Clara County are by Asian Americans,” DuBois said. “I don’t know how you say the zoning itself is exclusionary.”***

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Warm regards,

Rebecca

**Rebecca L. Eisenberg Esq.**  
[www.linkedin.com/in/eisenberg](http://www.linkedin.com/in/eisenberg)  
[www.winwithrebecca.com](http://www.winwithrebecca.com)  
[rebecca@winwithrebecca.com](mailto:rebecca@winwithrebecca.com)  
415-235-8078

**From:** Robert Neff  
**To:** [transportation@cityofpaloalto.gov](mailto:transportation@cityofpaloalto.gov); PABAC; Planning Commission  
**Cc:** [Star-Lack, Sylvia](mailto:Star-Lack_Sylvia)  
**Subject:** Act to connect MV / LA El Camino bike lanes to Palo Alto, at low cost.  
**Date:** Sunday, May 2, 2021 2:00:32 PM

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

Hello Transportation Staff, Planning and Transportation Committee, and Palo Alto PABAC,

We should act quickly to develop restriping plans for El Camino Real to connect bike lanes in Mountain View and Los Altos to the bike network in Palo Alto. This should be very low cost for Palo Alto, but staff engagement with Mountain View and Los Altos should be pursued with urgency.

Background:

From Rengsdorf to Adobe Creek, El Camino Real is bordered by Los Altos on the West side, and Mountain View and then Palo Alto on the East side. Mountain View is planning major changes to El Camino, installing bike lanes with hardscape on the section of El Camino that is entirely in Mountain View, South of Rengsdorf, but bike lanes closer to Palo Alto will require collaboration with neighbors. Los Altos is considering a new restriping of El Camino Real across the street from Mountain View. Restriping can be covered by CalTrans as part of the project, and plans need to be completed by January, 2022, for restriping in summer of 2022, after repaving.

How does this affect Palo Alto? We should be prepared to act to extend El Camino bike lanes to bike network connections in Palo Alto. At minimum, this would be a 200 foot section in front of the Country Inn Motel on El Camino to connect to the Cesano Court/Los Altos Ave. traffic signal. From Cesano Court bicyclists can connect via pathway to Monroe Drive and then Miller Ave and Wilkie Way. Los Altos Ave connects to Palo Alto's network via the off street path leading to Fletcher and Gunn schools. Better would be extending bike lanes north to Arastradero/Charleston and further.

We are fortunate that Los Altos already has done a parking study, including parking on the East side of El Camino in Palo Alto, from Adobe Creek south. That is here:

[https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/complete\\_streets\\_commission/meeting/53411/item\\_4\\_-\\_attachment\\_a\\_-\\_los\\_altos\\_-\\_ecr\\_parking\\_removal\\_study\\_for\\_bike\\_lane\\_installation.pdf](https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/complete_streets_commission/meeting/53411/item_4_-_attachment_a_-_los_altos_-_ecr_parking_removal_study_for_bike_lane_installation.pdf)

Here is a report to the Los Altos Complete Streets Commission regarding this work.

[https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/complete\\_streets\\_commission/meeting/53411/item\\_4\\_-\\_staff\\_report\\_-\\_el\\_camino\\_real\\_bike\\_lanes\\_-\\_042821.pdf](https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/complete_streets_commission/meeting/53411/item_4_-_staff_report_-_el_camino_real_bike_lanes_-_042821.pdf)

I received the note below from the Los Altos Complete Streets Commission vice chair. We both serve on the VTA BPAC.

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-- Robert Neff  
Palo Alto representative to VTA/county Bike/Ped Advisory Committee (and 2021 chair), and PABAC member.  
[robert@neffs.net](mailto:robert@neffs.net)

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

**Subject:**El Camino CalTrans bike lane proposal for PA, LA, MtView  
**Date:**2021-04-28 09:42  
**From:**Stacy Bruzek Banerjee <[stacybbanerjee@gmail.com](mailto:stacybbanerjee@gmail.com)>  
**To:**Robert Neff <[robert@neffs.net](mailto:robert@neffs.net)>

Robert,

It's a bit short notice, but I am just going through the packet for my Los Altos commission meeting tonight. One item on agenda is El Camino Real. Caltrans is resurfacing ECR next year between the Menlo Park/Palo Alto border all the way to 237. They have grant funds to put in bike lanes, if cities along the stretch provide approval and their policies (including addressing parking - parking removal).

Have you been looking at this in Palo Alto yet? And where do things stand/what is the thinking? Looks like Mountain View has already approved parking removal.

Here's our staff report:

[https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/complete\\_streets\\_commission/meeting/53411/item\\_4\\_-\\_staff\\_report\\_-\\_el\\_camino\\_real\\_bike\\_lanes\\_-\\_042821.pdf](https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/complete_streets_commission/meeting/53411/item_4_-_staff_report_-_el_camino_real_bike_lanes_-_042821.pdf)

Stacy  
M 415-317-3990

**From:** [Roberta Ahlquist](#)  
**To:** [Aram James](#)  
**Cc:** [Rebecca Eisenberg](#); [Council, City](#); [Planning Commission](#); [chuck jagoda](#); [WILPF Peninsula Palo Alto](#); [Human Relations Commission](#); [mark weiss](#)  
**Subject:** Re: The Mercury News E-Edition Article  
**Date:** Saturday, May 1, 2021 9:15:40 PM

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

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YES. I spent Thursday and Friday in Oakland taking a look at these diverse and creative alternatives. When will we have to courage to grow our city in a more collaborative, community-oriented and inclusive direction?  
roberta

On Sat, May 1, 2021 at 1:02 PM Aram James <[abjpd1@gmail.com](mailto:abjpd1@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hi Rebecca,  
Thanks for all of your spot on comments. Aram

Sent from my iPhone

On May 1, 2021, at 12:23 PM, Rebecca Eisenberg <[rebecca@winwithrebecca.com](mailto:rebecca@winwithrebecca.com)> wrote:

This is exactly how housing should evolve. Query why any human being should have to pay for a place to live. Query why all land is not owned by the public for the use of the public. Human beings are meant to live in social communities, to share resources, to work together. In a different universe, our society moved in the direction of social villages rather than in the direction of the toxic and private isolation that is fostered and protected, despite its harm, today.

Note that Cob on Wood is located under a 880 highway overpass. This is what we could see if Caltrain/HSR were moved to viaducts. No cost to the city. There likely are lots of locations that could host such attractive and sanitary shelter. Perhaps some that are under the radar to escape political scrutiny and public notice.

When our government leaves such huge gaps, human invention picks up. If a similar community grew here, would our local government quash it, when that community actually would be providing the resources that our city is legally and ethically required to provide? I fear that Palo Alto would destroy these beautiful communities. Palo Alto -- virtually alone in the world -- continues to cling to the myth that homeless shelters attract and increase homelessness, despite decades of evidence, studies, and lived experiences proving the opposite: that shelters and housing are the only known solution way to end homelessness.

Best,

Rebecca

**Rebecca L. Eisenberg Esq.**  
[www.linkedin.com/in/eisenberg](http://www.linkedin.com/in/eisenberg)  
[www.winwithrebecca.com](http://www.winwithrebecca.com)  
[rebecca@winwithrebecca.com](mailto:rebecca@winwithrebecca.com)  
415-235-8078

On Sat, May 1, 2021 at 9:29 AM Aram James <[abjpd1@gmail.com](mailto:abjpd1@gmail.com)> wrote:

Follow the link below to view the article.

[https://mercurynews-ca-app.newsmemory.com/?publink=18b8b9565\\_1345d69](https://mercurynews-ca-app.newsmemory.com/?publink=18b8b9565_1345d69)

Sent from my iPhone