

From: [Foley, Emily](#)
To: [Klicheva, Madina](#)
Subject: FW: 660 University Ave
Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2022 8:56:46 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)



Emily Foley, AICP
Planner
Planning and Development Services Department
(650) 617-3125 | emily.foley@cityofpaloalto.org
www.cityofpaloalto.org



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The City of Palo Alto is doing its part to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We have successfully transitioned most of our employees to a remote work environment. We remain available to you via email, phone, and virtual meetings during our normal business hours.

From: Kathleen Rotow <kathleenrotow@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 8, 2022 1:43 PM
To: Foley, Emily <Emily.Foley@CityofPaloAlto.org>
Subject: 660 University Ave

You don't often get email from kathleenrotow@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I am the owner of 789 University Ave and have feedback regarding The Notice of Preparation for the 660 University proposed project.

I have several concerns about this project. I am opposed to rezoning from Low Density Multiple Family Residence (RM-20) to high density Planned Community (PC). It is inappropriate in the proposed location given the foreseeable increase in traffic, noise and pollution. All of the aforementioned will negatively affect public safety and quality of life for nearby residents. As we are all aware, this expansive project is directly across the street from an elderly senior living facility that necessarily includes a population that cannot respond to the public safety, pollution, traffic and noise issues in the same manner as other populations. On the other side of the proposed project, there is another senior living development. Additionally, many residential homes are located in close proximity and the increased traffic, pollution and noise would be prohibitive for the residential nature of the area. This project is clearly adjacent to low density residential and senior living facilities. It would dramatically change the character of the area and should not be approved. It is my understanding that this development is trying to squeeze approximately 65 dwellings onto an area zoned for up to 20 dwellings per acre. In addition, it includes office space that is comparable to the total square footage on the site as it stands currently. You would be allowing an increase from the current 9,216 square feet to 42,189 square feet. This increase does not adhere to the current zoning parameters or to the nature of the area. This project should not be approved.

As the city is aware, the Middlefield/University intersection is already heavily congested with traffic and the noise currently generated is unacceptable. This large scale project will exacerbate an already busy and dangerous intersection and increase the noise level for area residents, including many seniors. Maybe the city should consider asking the developers to move the project next to one of their homes. I'm sure they would like the increase in traffic, noise and pollution not to mention the public safety issues it will generate.

This project should be implemented elsewhere. This is the wrong project, in the wrong place and the wrong size.

Respectfully,
Kathleen Rotow

P.S. The link provided for The Notice of Preparation is inaccurate.

From: [Foley, Emily](#)
To: [Klicheva, Madina](#)
Subject: FW: 660 University Project comments
Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2022 8:56:39 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)



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From: Alan Brauer, M.D. <drbrauer@totalcare.org>
Sent: Saturday, November 5, 2022 6:52 PM
To: Foley, Emily <Emily.Foley@CityofPaloAlto.org>
Subject: 660 University Project comments

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Hi Emily,

As we are located directly across the street from the proposed 660 University project, we are concerned about 2 main issues::

1. What are the noise mitigation measures that will be required? Our building is occupied primarily by mental health professional who engage in psychotherapy. This requires a quiet environment and we are concerned about intrusions into the ability of our professionals to conduct therapy sessions.
2. What measures will be required to permit unrestricted access to our driveway on Byron?
- 3.

Additionally, should this project receive final approval, can you provide any time frame for the possible start of any demolition?

Thanks for your attention to this important matter.

Alan & Donna Brauer
Owners, 630 University Ave., Palo Alto

From: [Janet L. Billups](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Foley, Emily](#); [Lait, Jonathan](#); [Stump, Molly](#); [Christopher Ream](#); [Leigh F. Prince](#)
Subject: Opposition to Project Proposed at 660 University Avenue
Date: Tuesday, November 15, 2022 11:38:07 AM
Attachments: [Letter to PTC re 660 University 11.15.22.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jlb@jsmf.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear City of Palo Alto Planning Commission,

The attached letter, submitted by Leigh Prince, on behalf of the Homeowner's Association for The Hamilton, a continuing care retirement community for seniors located at 555 Byron Street, expresses opposition to the project proposed at 660 University Avenue. The Hamilton encourages the Planning Commission to consider several of the alternatives outlined in the letter.

Kind regards,

Janet Billups, Legal Assistant to Leigh F. Prince, Esq.
Jorgenson, Siegel, McClure & Flegel LLP
[1100 Alma Street, Ste. 210](#)
[Menlo Park, CA 94025](#)
Ph. 650-324-9300
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PHILIP S. SOUSA

BRITTNEY L. STANDLEY
CHRISTIAN D. PETRANGLO
JOSEPH H. FELDMAN

November 15, 2022

Sent Via Email: Planning.Commission@CityofPaloAlto.org

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

Re: Opposition to Project Proposed at 660 University Avenue

Dear Honorable Members of the Planning and Transportation Commission,

This letter is written on behalf of the Homeowner's Association for The Hamilton, a continuing care retirement community for seniors with 36 units located at 555 Byron Street. The Hamilton is adjacent to the proposed mixed-use project which would consist of 65 residential units and 9,115 square feet of office ("Project") at 660 University Avenue ("Property"). The residents of The Hamilton, whose average age is in the mid-80s, will be significantly impacted by the proposed Project. In addition, the Project will impact a number of other senior communities in this "Senior Corner" of Palo Alto, including Lytton Gardens and Webster House (and Channing House).

Rather than proposing something compatible with the "Senior Corner," the Project proposes a density and intensity far in excess of any surrounding development and in excess of what is allowed by the current residential zoning or the City's Comprehensive Plan. This letter will highlight concerns with the merits of the Project as well as environmental impacts, and should be considered a comment letter on the Notice of Preparation. The Hamilton is concerned about impacts to transportation, air quality, noise, parking, pedestrian safety, land use/planning and the loss of a significant tree presented by Project with its unprecedented density and intensity. The Hamilton requests that the Planning and Transportation Commission ("PTC") recommend that the Project be reduced to be more consistent with the existing residential zoning and compatible with the surrounding senior communities.

Density Significantly Exceeds that Allowed by the Zoning or the Comprehensive Plan.

The Project proposes 65 units (47 studios, 12 one-bedroom and 6 two-bedroom units). Although this is a reduction of five units from the preliminary proposal reviewed by the City Council during the Planned Home Zoning (“PHZ”) pre-screening, this is still significantly above the density allowed by the Property’s RM-20 multifamily zoning. The maximum number of units allowed by the zoning would be 10 units. Thus, the Project is proposing six and a half times the maximum allowable zoning density. Furthermore, the Project also far exceeds the allowable residential density identified in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan would allow a density of 40 units per acre. On this approximately half-acre site, the maximum Comprehensive Plan density would be 20 units. Thus, the Project is proposing 45 units more (or more than three times the density) anticipated by the highest density identified for the Property in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

With 65 units on approximately one-half acre, the Project density is approximately 126 units per acre for this multifamily residential area. The highest density identified in the Housing Element for any property is 81.25 units per acre for general manufacturing and research, office and limited manufacturing zones. Thus, the proposed Project density is one and one-half times the highest density identified anywhere in the City in the draft Housing Element. This is also far in excess of other planned communities in this area. The Hamilton is located on approximately 1.18 acres and has 36 units for a density of 33 units per acre. Thus, the proposed Project is well over three times more dense than the neighboring development.

Because by any measure this Project is proposed at an unreasonably high density, The Hamilton encourages the PTC to recommend the Project’s density be significantly reduced.

Inadequate Public Benefit Provided in Exchange for Increased Density.

The Project does not provide a substantial public benefit adequate to justify the significant increase in density. The Project proposes to provide 20 percent affordable housing units (four very-low, four low and five moderate income units) consistent with the City Council direction on the minimum affordability necessary to support a rezoning to PHZ. However, given the significant increase in density, this is a woefully inadequate public benefit. To put it into perspective, a project that proposes 20 percent low-income units would be entitled to a 35 percent density bonus under state density bonus law (Government Code Section 65915). With a maximum Comprehensive Plan density of 20 units, a 35 percent density bonus would result in a 27-unit project.¹ In fact, the highest density bonus a project can receive using state density bonus law is 50 percent, which would allow a 30-unit project. Thus, although the PHZ does not require strict adherence to state law, it is important to note that if approved the City would be allowing a far greater density increase than mandated by state law in exchange for far less affordable housing.

¹ Strict compliance with the state density bonus law would result in a density bonus of less than 35 percent. State law generally requires one income category be selected to determine the density bonus; however, many jurisdictions as a policy matter will count units at lower affordability toward the higher category. With four very-low income units, the density bonus percentage would be 20 percent which would be a total project of 24 units. Four low income units would not qualify the Project for a density bonus. If the four very-low income were counted toward the low income category, with eight low income units, the Project would qualify for a 23 percent density bonus. This would allow a 25-unit project. With five moderate income units, the Project would not qualify for a density bonus. If the four very-low and four low income units were counted toward the moderate income category, the Project would qualify for a 15 percent density bonus. This would allow a 23-unit project.

Giving away this increased density also does not provide the City significant progress toward meeting its Regional Housing Need Allocation (“RHNA”) for the current Housing Element cycle. The City needs to plan for 1,556 very-low income units, 896 low income units and 1,013 moderate income units. For more than triple the allowable density, the City obtains only four very-low income units (0.2% of the need), four low income units (0.4% of the need) and five moderate units (0.4% of the need). Understanding that the City needs to plan to develop housing to meet its RHNA goals, the City should not “throw the baby out with the bath water.” Increased housing density should be approved within reasonable limits and certainly not so far in excess of that allowed by the zoning or the Comprehensive Plan, even with state law mandates layered on top. Approving this Project as proposed would unfairly put the burden on the seniors living at The Hamilton to allow the City as a whole to make negligible progress toward its RHNA goals. Therefore, The Hamilton encourages the PTC to recommend the density of this Project be substantially reduced.

Office Use Adds Intensity Without Benefit.

Not only does the Project far exceed the residential density, it also includes office. The Project proposes 9,115 square feet of general office. Office is not a permitted or conditional use in the RM-20 multifamily residential zoning district. Office uses are inconsistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan for this residential area. Further, general office is a departure from the existing non-conforming medical office. While medical office might serve the “Senior Corner,” general office does not. Instead, general office uses would add intensity and traffic congestion and create additional housing need without benefiting the surrounding community. Thus, The Hamilton urges the PTC to recommend removal of the office use from this Project.

In addition, the City should prepare a housing needs assessment (“HNA”), including consideration of the multiplier effect, as part of the environmental impact report. A HNA would help the City to understand how many employees will occupy the office space and the housing demand that will be generated by those workers. This is especially important in an era where office space per worker is declining, and the number of employees may be higher than anticipated (the average tech worker uses less than 250 square feet of office space).

Finally, the office vacancy rate in Palo Alto is currently at approximately 14 percent indicating there is no need for the development of office in this location where it is neither permitted, nor beneficial.² Thus, The Hamilton urges the PTC to recommend office be removed from this Project.

Transportation Impacts Potentially Significant.

The environmental impact report and the City in its deliberation regarding the merits of this Project should carefully consider the impact of the additional trips generated by the residential units and office use. The multifamily residential zoning anticipated 20 units per acre and no office. The Comprehensive Plan anticipated a maximum of 40 units per acre and no office. The intensity of this Project with approximately 126 units per acre and office will far exceed the transportation impacts presented in any environmental review for existing planning documents.

The transportation impact analysis and environmental impact report should not focus only on the impact during peak commute hours, but should consider the impact throughout the day. Such an analysis is important in this “Senior Corner” because many residents are home throughout the

² https://www.nmrk.com/storage-nmrk/uploads/fields/pdf-market-reports/1Q22-SPeninsula-Office-Market_2022-05-31-174425_nzty.pdf

day. The Hamilton is concerned that the additional traffic generated by the Project will impact their ability not only to drive, but also to walk safely in the neighborhood.

One related issue that should be studied in the transportation impact analysis and environmental impact report is the design of the Project's entry/exit for the garage onto Middlefield Road. The garage entry/exit is close to the traffic light at University Avenue and may cause significant queuing, which will likely lead to traffic jams on Middlefield Road. This congestion will lead people to try to bypass the traffic by cutting down Byron Street. Byron Street is narrow, and the fully utilized parking on either side makes it impossible for two moving cars to pass each other safely. Thus, cut through traffic down Byron Street should be analyzed. This is in addition to analyzing the impacts to University Avenue and Middlefield Road that are main arteries in Palo Alto.

Finally, the transportation impact analysis and environmental impact report should carefully consider the impacts on parking. The Project is proposing 82 spaces, which is 28 spaces less than the 110 spaces required. One of the two levels of parking proposes stackers, which can be difficult to operate and maintain. With inadequate and complicated parking, it is reasonable to conclude that many residents, workers and visitors will park off the Property. Consideration of the Project should include parking impacts such as additional miles travelled in search of parking and parking intrusion into surrounding areas.

Air Quality Impacts Should Be Carefully Analyzed.

Closely related to the transportation impacts, are the potential air quality impacts. As noted, this is an area referred to as "Senior Corner." Seniors are sensitive receptors who are at a heightened risk of negative health outcomes due to exposure to air pollution. The environmental impact report should include a health risk assessment and mitigate the Project to avoid negative health impacts to this sensitive community.

Tree Preservation is of Substantial Importance.

There is a beautiful Coastal Live Oak tree with a trunk diameter of 50 inches growing just over the property line. The canopy stretches approximately 45 feet over the Project site. It provides beauty and shade for the entire block and likely habitat for biological resources such as nesting birds. Careful consideration needs to be given to ensuring that this tree is adequately protected and survives and is in good health after the redevelopment of the Property to minimize the impact of the Project on aesthetics and biological resources. A professional arborist should consider not only the roots, but to how much of the canopy may need to be cut to allow the Project and how this can be limited to avoid impacting the environment.

Other Considerations Impacting Aesthetics, Land Use and Planning.

The setbacks on all streets and sidewalks proposed by the Project are greatly reduced from required setbacks. The required setback along Middlefield is a minimum of 24 feet. The required setback along University Avenue and Byron Street are both 16 feet. The Project would reduce each of these setbacks down to only 10 feet. These setbacks impact the pedestrian experience and may impact safety. These potential impacts should be considered.

The residential portion of the building is 50 feet tall and it is higher for mechanical and elevator equipment. This exceeds the height allowed in the multifamily zoning district. Plans for the Project reveal that a majority of the rooftop will be opened up as a social gathering common area with multiple barbeques, lounges, tables and chairs, including a TV mounted on one of the walls. The

Planning and Transportation Commission
Re: Opposition to Project Proposed at 660 University Avenue
November 15, 2022
Page 5

aesthetic impacts of the height of the building, any noise impacts from rooftop activities or mechanical equipment should be considered.

Alternatives to Consider.

The Hamilton encourages the environmental impact report to consider a number of alternatives to the proposed Project. One alternative that could be considered is a project that complies with the current zoning and Comprehensive Plan, including density, uses, setbacks, height, etc. This alternative could include additional density based on state density bonus law. Even with the additional density allowed by state law, such a project would likely be more responsible to its context and compatible with adjacent development. Another alternative would be a senior project with low income senior housing. Not only is there a need for senior housing and low income senior housing in Palo Alto, such a project may also have reduced impacts (e.g. seniors drive less). The Hamilton urges the PTC to consider either of these alternatives as preferable to the proposed Project.

The Hamilton thanks you for your time and attention to this matter and strongly encourages the PTC not to support moving this Project forward as proposed. The Project should be consistent with or a modest modification to the existing multifamily residential standards, should not include office and should consider providing senior housing.

Sincerely,

Leigh Prince

Leigh F. Prince

Cc: Emily Foley, Planner (Emily.Foley@CityofPaloAlto.org)
Jonathan Lait, Planning Director (Jonathan.Lait@CityofPaloAlto.org)
Molly Stump, City Attorney (Molly.Stump@cityofpaloalto.org)
Christopher Ream, President, The Hamilton HOA (ream@reamlaw.com)

From: [Aram James](#)
To: [Binder, Andrew](#); [Tony Dixon](#); [KEVIN JENSEN](#); [Jeff Rosen](#); [Sean Allen](#); [Filseth, Eric \(Internal\)](#); mike.wasserman@bos.sccgov.org; [Foley, Michael](#); [Afanasiev, Alex](#); [Lee, Craig](#); [Council, City](#); [Planning Commission](#); [GRP-City Council](#); [Bains, Paul](#); [Winter Dellenbach](#); [Shikada, Ed](#); [Gennady Sheyner](#); [Jay Boyarsky](#); [Joe Simitian](#); [Supervisor Otto Lee](#); [Supervisor Susan Ellenberg](#)
Subject: minor-traffic-stops-plummet-in-months-after-lapd-policy-change?
Date: Monday, November 14, 2022 11:31:11 AM

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But why is PAPD Chief Andrew Binder unwilling to stop racially loaded pretext stops? and adopt a program similar to the LAPD ? See Binder's answer on pretext stops- to Weekly reporter Gennady Sheyner in his ***Battling Bias in Policing*** piece dated Nov 4, 2022 (see below the latines piece below)

https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-11-14/minor-traffic-stops-plummet-in-months-after-lapd-policy-change?_amp=true

https://www.paloaltoonline.com/news/2022/11/04/battling-bias-in-law-enforcement-what-data-reveals-about-the-palo-alto-police?utm_source=express-2022-11-04&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=express