

**Baumb, Nelly**

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**From:** Palo Alto Forward <palo.alto.fwd@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 29, 2021 4:47 PM  
**To:** Council, City; DuBois, Tom; Cormack, Alison; Kou, Lydia; Filseth, Eric (Internal); Tanaka, Greg; Stone, Greer; Burt, Patrick  
**Cc:** Wong, Tim  
**Subject:** RE: Agenda Item #7 Housing Element Working Group  
**Attachments:** Housing Element CAC.pdf

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

Dear City Council and Planning Staff,

Thank you for beginning the 2023-2030 Housing Element cycle process. During the COVID-19 pandemic it has become more clear that safe, affordable housing is out of reach for many in the region and that unless Palo Alto prioritizes building new homes at all income levels, we will leave our low and middle income residents behind. Incomes in the region have not kept pace with housing costs and families with elementary and middle school aged children are leaving. Our current median age is about 10% higher than neighboring communities and is expected to exceed that of Florida's if we don't begin to make space for future generations. In the current cycle we only permitted for about one-third of the 1,988 affordable homes allocated to Palo Alto, which has only increased the housing prices. While we may not always agree on the solution, we cannot ignore that our failure to act is impacting the community as a whole.

As you begin to identify and appoint Housing Element Working Group members, it's crucial that you select residents who will create a productive and equitable process. The primary commitment for Working Group members must be to identify sites and policies to meet our regional housing goals. In addition, they must help demonstrate our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in leadership and decision-making. We urge City Council to be attentive in the appointment process for this Working Group. When considering the composition for this panel, please encourage recruitment for residents who bring positive energy, commitment and expertise and also include the perspective of **renters, residents under age 40, affordable housing residents and waitlisted BMR applicants**. We failed to do this in the last cycle but we don't need to make that mistake again.

The Housing Element process is about planning for Palo Alto's future - for new families and neighbors - and the working group should be composed of members fundamentally committed to that goal. Thank you for keeping this in mind as you identify potential appointees to this committee.

Sincerely,  
Palo Alto Forward Board

# PALO ALTO FORWARD

February 1, 2021

RE: Agenda Item #7 Housing Element Working Group

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