

From: Shachi Bahl
To: Shikada, Ed - Council, City
Cc: Jonathan Lait
Subject: LETTER OF SUPPORT - Palo Alto Dental Group Supports Proposed Housing Project at 660 University Avenue, Palo Alto, CA
Date: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 6:33:43 PM
Attachments: image.png

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Date: October 14, 2021
From: Palo Alto Dental Group
To: Palo Alto City Council
Subject: LETTER OF SUPPORT - Palo Alto Dental Group Supports Proposed Housing Project at 660 University Avenue, Palo Alto, CA

Mayor DuBois, Vice Mayor Burt, and Council members:

We hope this letter finds you well. On Monday, October 25, 2021 the Palo Alto City Council is scheduled to hold a pre-screening regarding Smith Development's proposed multi-family housing project at 660 University Avenue. We are writing to you today to voice our enthusiastic support for Smith Development's proposed project.

While 511 Byron Street has been home to Palo Alto Dental Group for years, we support this proposed project for two primary reasons. First, this project will result in bringing much needed housing units to our community. While no one project can solve our housing shortage, the cumulative impact of these projects can substantially improve housing availability in our region. Second, this project will not result in the loss of our dental practice to the patients we serve in Palo Alto. We are not leaving Palo Alto and have a good relocation site in the city. It will be an updated modern facility , which will allow us to continue serving our patients to the highest standards.

This project represents change and it is positive change. Smith Development's proposed project is appropriately located in the downtown Palo Alto area with great proximity to community serving retail and public transit. In closing, we hope it is clear from this letter that Palo Alto Dental Group supports Smith Development's proposed multi-family housing project at 660 University Avenue and that Council support and approval of this project will not result in the loss of Palo Alto Dental Group services to the community. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this letter and please let us know if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Shachi Bahl, DMD Upkar Vazirani DDS Peter Kono DDS Robert Iverson DMD
Shachi Bahl, DMD Martha Vanzina, DDS. Peter Kono, DDS Robert Iverson, DMD

Cc: Palo Alto City Manager Ed Shikada
Palo Alto Planning Director Jonathan Lait

From: [Janet L. Billups](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Lait, Jonathan](#); [Stump, Molly](#); [Gutierrez, Samuel](#); ream@reamlaw.com
Subject: The Hamilton Homeowner's Association Opposition to 660 University Avenue: Mixed Use Office and Residential (PHZ)
Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021 10:55:19 AM
Attachments: [Letter to CPA re 660 University Pre-Screening.pdf](#)

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Dear Honorable Mayor and City Council,

The attached letter, submitted by Leigh Prince on behalf of the Hamilton Homeowners Association, brings to attention the proposed project at 660 University Avenue. We request that the City Council direct the applicant to come back with a project more in line with the underlying multifamily residential zoning and compatible with the surrounding community.

Regards,

Janet Billups, Legal Assistant
Jorgenson, Siegel, McClure & Flegel LLP
[1100 Alma Street, Ste. 210](#)
[Menlo Park, CA 94025](#)
Ph. 650-324-9300
jlb@jsmf.com

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BRITTNEY L. STANDLEY

OF COUNSEL
KENT MITCHELL
LEIGH F. PRINCE

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JOHN D. JORGENSEN
MARGARET A. SLOAN
DIANE S. GREENBERG

DECEASED
MARVIN S. SIEGEL
(1936 - 2012)
JOHN R. COSGROVE
(1932 - 2017)

October 21, 2021

Sent Via Email: City.Council@CityofPaloAlto.org

City of Palo Alto City Council
Palo Alto City Hall
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

**Re: The Hamilton Homeowner's Association Opposition to
660 University Avenue: Mixed Use Office and Residential (PHZ)**

Dear Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Homeowner's Association for The Hamilton senior community ("the Hamilton community") located at 555 Byron Street, which is adjacent to the proposed project at 660 University. The Hamilton community opposes the project at its current density and intensity and requests that the City Council do the same, directing the applicant to come back with a project more in line with the underlying multifamily residential zoning and compatible with the surrounding community.

As will be discussed in this letter, the project proposes a significant adjustment to base zoning. The central issue is that the project proposes 70 units, but the maximum number of units allowed by the multifamily residential zoning would be 10 units. This is seven times the maximum allowable density. The proposed project also does not conform with the City's Comprehensive Plan, which would allow a higher density. It far exceeds the Comprehensive Plan's maximum allowable multifamily density of 40 units per acre, which would be 20 units for the half-acre project site. Furthermore, the proposed project does not provide a substantial public benefit. The project proposes less than 20% below market rate units, while requesting a significant density increase that inequitably places the heavy burden of increased development, including increased traffic and congestion, on the community. As a result, consistent with its policy direction regarding planned home zoning ("PHZ"), the City Council should not support this project as proposed.

Significant Departure from Multifamily Residential Zoning

To approve a rezoning from multifamily residential RM-20 to PHZ, the City Council has indicated the proposed project should be no more than a "moderate adjustment" to base zoning. This discussion will highlight the significant departure from the underlying multifamily residential zoning

proposed by the project. In the RM-20 multifamily residential zoning district, the allowable residential density is 11-20 units per acre. Because the project site is a mere 22,526 square feet, the maximum allowable density would be 10 units. Far in excess of this maximum allowable density, the project proposes 70 units. As the staff report notes, this equates to a density of 142 units per acre, a density unprecedented in Palo Alto or surrounding Peninsula communities. This density far exceeds not only the maximum RM-20 zoning density, but also the maximum residential density identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Respectful of the City's need for housing, shoehorning seven times the maximum permitted number of units on this site is unreasonable. The Hamilton community will experience this unprecedented density daily in significantly increased traffic and congestion raising concerns for senior safety, as well as a loss of peace in their golden years. This level of density and intensity in this location burdens, not benefits, the community and should not be encouraged to proceed.

While the density of the proposed project is the most egregious, the proposed project disturbingly fails to respect any aspect of the underlying zoning:

1. The maximum floor area ratio ("FAR") allowed in the multifamily residential RM-20 zoning district is 0.5:1 FAR. The project proposes 2.29 FAR or more than four times the maximum allowable.
2. Office is not a permitted or conditional use in the multifamily residential zoning district; it is also not consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Nevertheless, the project proposes 9,115 square feet of general office (which is a departure from the existing non-conforming medical office). General office, which will generate a significant number of trips and vehicle congestion, should not be allowed. The project should be residential only, which would improve the jobs-housing balance.
3. The bulk of the building is 45 feet high, with an extra 5 feet for parapet around a roof terrace, and then mechanical equipment and structures rising another 5 feet above that, for a total of 55 feet. The maximum height in the RM-20 zoning district is 30 feet; the maximum height in the PHZ zoning district is 35 feet adjacent to residential zones. The project proposes a building height nearly twice the maximum allowable.
4. The setbacks on all streets and sidewalks are greatly reduced. The side yard on Byron Street should have a setback of 16 feet, but has only 10 feet, a reduction of 6 feet. The front along University Avenue should also have a setback of 16 feet, but it has been reduced to only 6 feet, a reduction of 10 feet. The side yard along Middlefield Road should have a setback of 24 feet, but it is only 10 feet, a reduction of 14 feet.
5. The project requires 115 parking stalls and is providing only 103, which is a 10% reduction. In addition, the project proposes to provide 68 of those spaces through mechanical lifts, effectively reducing the supply even further as lifts are cumbersome to use, and have not been favored by the City Council in past projects.

A project that fails to respect any of the multifamily residential zoning standards does not have the neighborhood compatibility required in Municipal Code Section 18.13.060(a) which states: "Development in a multiple-family residential district shall be responsible to its context and compatible with adjacent development."

In a recent staff report dated May 18, 2021, for the 2239 Wellesley PHZ pre-screening, City staff stated: "The proposed FAR is approximately four times the floor area ratio allowed within the R-1 zone and almost none of the special standards required for PHZ projects are met under the current design (e.g. setbacks, daylight plane, and height). These are significant differences between the base zoning and the proposed project; suggesting the project may not align with Council's most recent policy direction regarding PHZs." The staff noted that while City's Comprehensive Plan includes goals and policies that encourage housing development (Policy L-

2.3 and L-3.3), it also identifies programs and policies that speak to transitions in scale between developments (Policy L-1.3), discouraging abrupt changes in scale and density (Policy L-6.7 and Program L6.7.1) and that discourage reducing daylight plane requirements adjacent to single-family residential uses (Policy L-6.8). Similarly here, although the staff report does not reach the same conclusion, the significant differences between the proposed project and the underlying zoning and surrounding community, which are even greater than those of this previous PHZ proposal, should lead the City Council to find that the proposed project does not align with the Council's policy direction regarding PHZ applications.

The City of Palo Alto established its existing zoning standards with community input to guide development in this location. The PHZ allows moderate adjustments to the zoning standards, however the proposed project disregards the community's standards in their entirety. The Hamilton community respectfully requests that the City Council direct the applicant to pay attention to and respect the multifamily zoning standards rather than ignoring them entirely and propose a project that is more appropriate to this location.

Inadequate Below Market Rate Housing

To approve a rezoning to PHZ, the City Council has indicated a threshold requirement is the provision of 20% below market rate units. Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 18.04.030(a)(16) defines a below market rate ("BMR") housing unit as "any housing unit sold or rented to very-low, low- or moderate-income households pursuant to the City of Palo Alto's below market rate program administered by the Palo Alto Housing Corporation, or a successor organization." Citywide affordable housing requirements, Municipal Code Section 18.65.020, also defines "affordable unit" as "a dwelling unit affordable to very low, low or moderate income households." Above moderate units do not meet the definition of a BMR unit or an affordable unit. This is consistent with the City's BMR program which seeks "to increase the amount of housing affordable to individuals and families with less than median income" and the Income Standards and Rent Limits chart for use in the City's BMR Program that only goes as high as moderate income. This is also consistent with state law (Government Code Section 65915, et. seq.) which grants a density bonus and incentives for providing affordable housing at very low, low and moderate incomes.

In light of the foregoing, the project only proposes 10 affordable units – four very low, three low and three moderate. The four above moderate income units do not count toward the requirement to provide 20% affordable. Therefore, the staff report is incorrect in its conclusion that the proposed project provides 20% affordable consistent with the PHZ requirement – it provides only 14% affordable. This is inadequate for the City to move the PHZ forward in light of the City Council policy direction that 20% affordable be a threshold for rezoning. The community benefit is simply not there with such a low percentage of BMR units.

To put it in perspective, if the project maximized the base zoning of 10 units and provided five moderate income units, state law would entitle the project to a 50% density bonus. This would result in five additional market rate units for a total project of 15 units. Following this logic, assuming with double the amount of affordable units or 10 moderate income units, the project would be entitled to double the density bonus or a 100% bonus, the total project would still only be 20 units. Nevertheless, for only 10 affordable units, the City is being asked to agree to a 70 unit project. This is not a community benefit, it is simply a benefit to the developer's rate of return. The Hamilton community respectfully asserts that this is not the type of project that the City Council should be incentivizing with the PHZ zoning.

Comparison to Neighboring Planned Community Projects

A number of projects in the area, including the Hamilton community, Channing House, Webster House and Lytton Gardens, utilize Planned Community ("PC") zoning. All of these neighboring PC projects are senior housing projects, which by their nature have unique needs distinct from a standard residential development as is being proposed at 660 University. This discussion will focus on a comparison between the Hamilton community and the proposed project.

The ordinance rezoning the Hamilton community to Planned Community allows an increase in floor area from 1.0 FAR as required by the underlying zoning to 1.70 FAR to "accommodate activities and services of a senior living community." The proposed project has no similar justification to increase FAR from 0.5 to 2.29. Furthermore, although the Hamilton community had a 70% increase in FAR to provide adequate space for senior services, the proposed project requests a much larger 458% increase. The community benefit with the Hamilton community was the provision of senior support services to allow senior residents to remain in the community and the payment of a significant (\$500,000) financial contribution to the City to provide benefits for seniors and senior services. As is discussed in the section of this letter regarding affordable housing, this project is doing extremely little to provide affordable housing as a benefit to the community and is providing no additional financial contribution to the City's affordable housing fund. Thus, there is no comparison and the Hamilton community's opposition cannot be portrayed as claiming what is "good for the goose is not good for the gander." The Hamilton community would instead encourage the provision of senior housing in this location, which is referred to in the community as the "senior corner," consistent with the multifamily residential zoning.

Conclusion

The Hamilton community appreciates the significant amount of staff time and resources these preapplications consume and thanks you for your time and attention to this matter. The Hamilton community strongly encourages the City Council not to support moving this project forward as proposed. The project should be consistent with or a modest modification to the underlying residential density and other standards, the project should not include office and the project should include a true public benefit, such as affordable senior housing.

Sincerely,

Leigh Prince

Leigh F. Prince

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

From: [Joann Meredith](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Proposed building at 660 University
Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021 3:15:27 PM

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I support the things Leigh Prince proposes and I want to add a couple of other considerations.

The proposed building is in the flood zone and, although dry now, think of the future. Digging in a flood zone should not be permitted. Recollect what happened to Millennium Towers in San Francisco.

The size of the apartments are much too small; they can accommodate only one person. That is very impractical.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joann Meredith

From: [Christopher Ream](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: FW: Opposition to 660 University Project; October 25 Agenda, Item 2
Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021 10:56:16 PM
Attachments: [660 - Ream Letter on Traffic and Parking - 20211021.pdf](#)
Importance: High

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From: Christopher Ream <ream@reamlaw.com>
Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021 at 10:42 PM
To: Palo Alto City Council <CityCouncil@CityofPaloAlto.org>
Cc: "Samuel Gutierrez, Planner" <Samuel.Gutierrez@cityofpaloalto.org>, "Jonathan Lait, Planning Director" <Jonathan.Lait@CityofPaloAlto.org>, "Molly Stump, City Attorney" <Molly.Stump@cityofpaloalto.org>, "Leigh F. Prince, Esq." <lfp@jsmf.com>
Subject: Opposition to 660 University Project; October 25 Agenda, Item 2

Dear and City Council Members,

In my role as President of The Hamilton Homeowners Association, I submit the attached letter in opposition to the application for constructing a large building at 660 University Avenue. Not only does the proposed project grossly violate many rules and mandates of the City of Palo Alto as has been described in the letter submitted by Leigh F. Prince earlier, the attached letter brings to the Council's attention the fact that approval of the proposed project would:

1. Endanger a magnificent, protected Coastal Live Oak tree;
2. Cause significant traffic problems at the intersection of University and Middlefield; and
3. Severely exacerbate the already existing downtown parking problem.

Please ensure that the attached letter is provided to each Council Member in their agenda packets for the Council Meeting Monday evening.

Christopher Ream

555 Byron Street, #409
Palo Alto, CA 94301
1-650-424-0821
ream@reamlaw.com

THE HAMILTON HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Christopher Ream, President

555 Byron Street
Palo Alto, California 94301

Telephone: 1-650-424-0821
Email: ream@reamlaw.com

October 21, 2021

Via email: CityCouncil@CityofPaloAlto.org

Palo Alto City Council
Palo Alto City Hall
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Re: Opposition to 660 University Project
October 25, 2021 Agenda, Item 2

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

The Hamilton is a senior living (55+) condominium development located in the transition zone from low-rise apartments and single-family homes to the larger buildings of downtown Palo Alto. The average age of the residents in The Hamilton is mid-80's. The Hamilton shares the block with the proposed development at 660 University Avenue. The Board of Directors of the Hamilton Homeowners Association (the "HHA"), with the support of its members/residents, has resolved to fight against the proposed development.

If you are in a hurry, you can jump down to "Parking" on page 3.

Lytton Gardens, Webster House and Webster House Health Center are also within a block and directly across the street from the proposed development. Channing House is two blocks away. Because of this concentration of elderly citizens, the area is frequently referred to as "Senior Corner."

I am Christopher Ream. My wife Anne and I have been Palo Alto residents for more than 50 years and are now residents of The Hamilton. The Hamilton community strongly opposes the proposed development. I am the President of the HHA and am personally committed to stopping, or at least significantly revising, the proposed building along University Avenue that will materially adversely affect us and all of our neighbors.

Attorney's Letter

The HHA has retained a highly qualified attorney with substantial experience in real estate development: Leigh Prince of the law firm of Jorgenson, Siegel, McClure & Flegel. Our attorney has sent a letter to the City Council articulating just some of many reasons why the Council should deny the developer's application for this proposed project:

Unprecedented flouting of the City's density rules for residential units;

Ignoring the City's rule against including office space in a residential development;

The failure to provide substantial public benefit;

Violation of setback standards all around the project;

And other points.

Tree Preservation

There are other problems such as the almost certain killing of a magnificent, protected Coast Live Oak tree with a 45-inch diameter trunk and corresponding foliage which has brought shade and comfort to so many in The Hamilton and other neighbors. Residents should not have to worry that they will lose their view of this beautiful tree.

Traffic Jam on Middlefield

Out of concern for the safety and peace of mind of the elderly residents of The Hamilton and the other senior living developments nearby, I want to bring to the attention of the Council the traffic and parking problems this project will dump on Palo Alto if it goes forward.

University Avenue and Middlefield Road are main traffic arteries in Palo Alto, and a smooth flowing intersection of University and Middlefield is crucial to traffic in the City. There already is congestion at that intersection, and the proposed project will cause huge traffic jams there.

The project includes a 103-car underground garage with the only entry/exit being onto Middlefield Road less than 100 feet from the traffic light at University Avenue. Cars traveling northwest on Middlefield that want to enter the garage will have to cross traffic less than 100 feet from the intersection, and thus will not have a good view of cars turning off University onto Middlefield. This is a dangerous situation and one that will back up traffic on Middlefield.

A majority of the cars exiting the garage will want to turn left and cross traffic on Middlefield in order to go towards Menlo Park on Middlefield, towards Stanford on University, or out to the freeway on University. With the red light at the intersection less than 100 feet away, turning left across traffic on Middlefield is frequently going to cause traffic jams. A few cautious drivers

will turn right and then work their way around the neighborhoods to get back to where they want to go, causing excess traffic in those neighborhoods, and be a danger to the many elderly walking around the neighborhood for a little exercise.

Parking

Parking in downtown Palo Alto is a problem the City has been dealing with for years and continues to deal with.

The Hamilton sees it every day. The Hamilton is on the short block of Byron between University and Hamilton. It is a narrow street to start with, but on every workday, every single parking spot on both sides of the street is filled all day long. This narrows the drivable room so that two cars going in opposite directions cannot pass; one has to slowly pull into a driveway to make room for the other to pass. We also get traffic on Byron of cars trying to avoid the congestion at the University/Middlefield intersection.

This proposed project for 660 University Avenue is going to greatly exacerbate the parking problem. On top of that, it appears to me that the developers have revealed on the face of their application that they have no intention of providing 103 parking stalls if their application is approved. How many cars will that add to those cruising around downtown looking for a parking space? Follow me please through their application (2nd Submittal on 09/14/2021):

On the first page, under the section "PROPOSED BUILDING AREA – PARKING AREA," they say "103 TOTAL STALLS" divided between "LEVEL P1 (49 STALLS)" and "LEVEL P2 (54 STALLS)"

Then immediately below that in "PARKING REQUIRED," they calculate that the City requires 115 parking stalls, including four ADA stalls, two of which must be Van ADA. In any event they are short 12 stalls.

Then immediately below that in "PARKING PROVIDED," the application switches stalls around and now says "LEVEL P1 - 33 STALLS (STD.);" (not 49) and "LEVEL P2 - 70 STALLS (STD. + STACKERS) (not 54).

Moving down to page 8 with drawings of the two underground garage levels which are now called "B1" and "B2". The drawing of B1 still says 33 stalls, but the drawing shows 30 standard stalls and 5 more stuck behind other cars, for a total of 35.

The drawing of B2 still says 70 stalls, but the drawing shows only 3 standard stalls and 68 stacker stalls.

The developers never show a location for the four ADA stalls (two of which must be Van ADA).

How is any resident or office occupant/visitor going to operate a stacker or move someone else's car? They are not. This configuration, notwithstanding that it is short of the required spaces, will require valet parking 24/7. Is the developer going to pick up the cost of a team of valets for years to come?

What this tells me is that the developer has paid little attention to the parking configuration because it has no intention of providing 103 useable parking stalls or any number close to 103, much less the required 115. If the Council were to approve this application with this glaring defect, the downtown parking problem will be made much worse.

Looking at the drawings, it seems that only 30 readily accessible parking stalls can be put on each garage level. The developer has two choices:

- (1) Expand the garage to four levels underground; or
- (2) Eliminate the office space and scale back the number of units so that the required number of stalls including ADA stalls is 60. This is the preferred option.

Conclusion

My observations regarding the traffic and parking problems caused by support of this proposed development should be considered along with the strong legal points raised by our attorney. The Hamilton community strongly opposes this application for excessive development of the half acre of our block along University and urges the Council to reject it.

Thank you for your consideration,



Christopher Ream

cc: Samuel Gutierrez, Planner (Samuel.Gutierrez@cityofpaloalto.org)
Jonathan Lait, Planning Director (Jonathan.Lait@CityofPaloAlto.org)
Molly Stump, City Attorney (Molly.Stump@cityofpaloalto.org)
Leigh F. Prince, Esq. (lfp@jsmf.com)

From: [JY Park](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: 660 University Ave
Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021 9:21:39 PM

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Dear Council Member:

As a member of senior resident living next to 660 University Avenue, I oppose the building under review at 660 University Ave. I believe the project is not in line with the underlying multifamily residential zoning and is not compatible with the surrounding community. Please either reject or modify the plan accordingly.

Sincerely,
Jin Y. Park
555 Byron Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

From: [C.S. Park](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: 660 University Ave
Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021 9:12:40 PM

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Dear Council Member:

As one of many senior residents living adjacent to 660 University Avenue, I oppose the building under review at 660 University Avenue. Crowding, traffic, lack of affordability make this project highly undesirable. Please either reduce the plan greatly or reject it out of hand in accordance with the underlying multi-family residential zoning and compatible with the neighboring community.

Sincerely,
Chong S. Park
555 Byron St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Richard Craswell](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: October 25th city Council Agenda, Item 2
Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021 8:35:57 PM

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As a senior resident living adjacent to 660 University, I oppose the building under review at 660 University Avenue.

Crowding, traffic, and lack of affordability make this highly undesirable. Please either reduce the plan greatly or reject it out of hand.

Sincerely,

Richard Craswell

555 Byron St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Carol Gilbert](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: October 25th City Council Agenda, Item 2
Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021 5:55:48 PM
Attachments: [PastedGraphic-1.tiff](#)

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Dear Council Member: October 21, 2021

As a senior resident living adjacent to 660 University, I oppose the building under review at 660 University Avenue. Crowding, traffic, and lack of affordability make this highly undesirable. Please either reduce the plan greatly or reject it out of hand.

Sincerely,



555 Byron St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Carol Gilbert](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: October 25th City Council Agenda, Item 2
Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021 5:51:19 PM

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Please sign and forward this today (Thursday), because the clerks put the packages together for each Council Member on Friday. Please call (650-424-0821) if you need help. If you print and sign, Eric can pick them up from you.

If you can Email, Send To: city.council@cityofpaloalto.org leaving the Subject you see in this message.

Do not include this part above the double line.

=====

Dear Council Member: October 21, 2021

As a senior resident living adjacent to 660 University, I oppose the building under review at 660 University Avenue. Crowding, traffic, and lack of affordability make this highly undesirable. Please either reduce the plan greatly or reject it out of hand.

Sincerely,

555 Byron St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Joe Shank](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: 660 University Project
Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021 4:59:17 PM

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Attention City Council Members:

I strongly object to the proposed project at this address, it does not meet many city codes, will over crowd the area with too many cars exiting onto Middlefield.

Please kill this project for these reasons and many many more which you are aware of...

I reside at 555 Byron Street Palo Alto, Ca 94301

Joe Shank
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Mimi and Eric Carlson](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Letter from Peter Sturrock re 606 University
Date: Friday, October 22, 2021 6:57:30 AM

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[Learn why this is important](#)

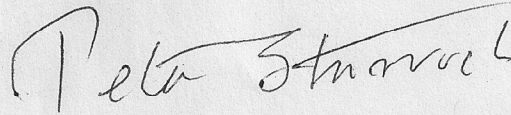
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Council Member:

October 21, 2021

As a senior resident living adjacent to 660 University, I oppose the building under review at 660 University Avenue. Crowding, traffic, and lack of affordability make this highly undesirable. Please either reduce the plan greatly or reject it out of hand.

Sincerely,



Peter Stravoch

555 Byron St.

Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Mimi and Eric Carlson](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Proposed Project at 660 University
Date: Friday, October 22, 2021 5:11:59 AM

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

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October 21, 2021

Dear Major and Palo Alto Council Member:

As senior residents living adjacent to 660 University, I oppose the project under review at 660 University Avenue. The density, traffic generation, inadequate parking, removal of mature trees, and lack of affordability make this project highly undesirable. Please either recommend major reductions to the proposal or reject it out of hand.

Sincerely,

Eric and Mimi Carlson
555 Byron St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Richard Smallwood](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: A concern about the plan for 660 University Ave.
Date: Friday, October 22, 2021 1:14:27 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from rsmallwd35@gmail.com.
[Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Council Member: October 22, 2021

As a senior resident living adjacent to 660 University, I oppose the building under review at 660 University Avenue. Crowding, traffic, and lack of affordability make this highly undesirable. Please either reduce the plan greatly or reject it out of hand.

Sincerely,
Richard Smallwood
550 Byron Street, Apt. 204
PalAlto, CA 94301

From: [David Gilbert](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Gilbert David](#)
Subject: Opposition to Proposed Building Project at 660 University Ave.
Date: Friday, October 22, 2021 10:18:48 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from gilbert.co@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Council Member: October 21, 2021

I oppose the project under review for 660 University Avenue. Crowding, traffic, and lack of affordability make this highly undesirable. Please either reduce the plan greatly or reject it out of hand. I am a senior resident living adjacent to 660 University,

Sincerely,
[David Gilbert](#)
555 Byron St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Gary K. Roberts](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: October 25 City Council Agenda, Item 2
Date: Friday, October 22, 2021 9:19:22 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

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

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Palo Alto City Council Members,

I am Dr. Gary Roberts. I have been in dental practice here in Palo Alto and at Stanford and Lucille Packard Children's Hospital for over 30 years. My colleagues and I recently started our Cardinal Dental practice at 517 Byron Street, having moved off Welch Road after being there since 1989. At 517 Byron, we have three dentists and six staff members serving the Palo Alto community. Our offices are immediately adjacent to the proposed 660 University development.

There is a majestic Coastal Live Oak tree (the "Tree") on our property about one foot from the property line of the proposed development. The Tree's trunk is 144 inches in circumference and 45 inches in diameter, and its limbs stretch out about 35 feet over the parking lot at 660 University. The Tree brings shade and joy to us and everyone else on the block.



View from 660 University parking lot



View from Byron and past our offices

This proposed project puts this beautiful Tree in grave danger. The project's above

ground structure would be only 22 feet from our property line, and this means that more than 13 feet of limbs will be sliced off, probably a lot more. Even more frightening, what will the two-story underground garage do to the Tree's root system which have been free to spread out over the years under the parking lot? The plans show a cutback in the garage to give 27 feet of clearance for the roots, but that is not nearly enough for a tree of this size. I am not an arborist, but several of my patient's are--at Stanford, Fiololi, and other commercial and civic organizations. I am told that one common rule of thumb is that a tree's roots are one and one-half to three times wider than the foliage. For the Tree's 36-foot limbs, that would be 50 to 100 feet of roots out under the parking lot where the new building would go. Another common rule is to have one foot of roots for every one inch of trunk diameter. For the Tree's 45-inch trunk, that would be 45 feet of roots. A two-story underground garage structure only 27 feet away will put this magnificent Tree in grave danger.

The Palo Alto Municipal Code appears to specify that this Tree is "protected" as it is a large Coastal Live Oak; because it is a protected tree the City mandates a "Dripline Area" around the Tree with a radius of 10x the diameter of the tree's trunk. The diameter is 45", so the Dripline Area extends out 450" or 37.5 feet, well beyond the 27-foot cutback suggested by the developer. The Municipal Code also mandates that no trenching or excavating may be done within that Dripline Area. You don't have to be an experienced contractor to know that there will be plenty of construction work done closer to the Tree than 27 feet in clear violation of the Municipal Code.

This is not just a legal technicality to us. We set up our dental offices here this past spring to continue serving the Palo Alto community. I am not the owner of this property, but we have options to lease it for 15-years. If the proposed building at 660 University is allowed to be built, the Tree's limbs will be severed on one side, likely disrupting the Tree's balance, potentially allowing strong gravitational forces to push the Tree over, perhaps crashing into our office. In addition, the roots needed to hold the Tree back from tipping over will have been cut and lost their gripping force. How soon will the Tree topple over and crash into our offices? How soon will we have to abandon our offices and shut down our dental practice because of this potential imminent danger?

Please don't let this happen.

Thank you,

Gary K. Roberts, D.D.S.
Stanford University Department of Surgery
Division of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
Dental Medicine & Surgery Service
and by Courtesy of Otolaryngology/Head & Neck Surgery

and

Cardinal Dental
517 Byron Street

Palo Alto, CA 94301

(650) 328-6684

CardinalDentists.com

CardinalDentists@gmail.com

From: [Rebecca Sanders](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: gsheyner@paweeekly.com
Subject: Agenda Item #2 for October 25, 2021
Date: Saturday, October 23, 2021 11:34:47 AM

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

Re: October 25, 2021, Agenda Item #2 – 1033 Amarillo Pre-screening

Dear Mayor DuBois and Council Members:

PAN takes issue with the assumed privilege of any developer asking the city to change its zoning code when to do so would obviously harm other property owners. Regarding 1033 Amarillo, asking for a split into substandard lots, not having to stick to the flag lot one-story rule, and other exemptions from our existing R-1 regulations is unfair to all the other landowners in the city who have complied with our stricter rules for many decades. We understand that developers will request special treatment because it profits them to do so. What we don't understand is granting exemptions when to do so is unfair to others.

Without taking us through the tedium of adjusting our laws for them, the applicant could achieve profitable results and follow the code by requesting a parcel split into three compliant parcels and then developing those. This would allow them three regular homes plus perhaps three ADUs or JADUs. Those ADUs and JADUs will likely have somewhat lower rents than any of the eight homes in the applicant's proposal. So, by not granting the applicant's current request, we could gain more lower-rent housing, which is a high priority for the City.

What a marvelous opportunity to save the applicant, the staff, and the Council time (and money) by urging the applicant to come back with a proposal that complies with Palo Alto's current zoning code.

By encouraging this developer in their aspirations of changing the code for them (as previous councils have done), Council will no doubt continue to encourage an ever-growing flood of time-wasting pre-screenings and subsequent applications that do not meet our code and which harm others.

I have read the excellent research that Annette Glanckopf and my PAN co-chair Sheri Furman presented in their letter to you on behalf of the Midtown Residents Association. I hope you can appreciate the motivation behind the hours of work that went into preparing that memorandum. Isn't it reasonable, wise, and just to ask that those who want to do business in our city comply with its codes?

Sincerely,

Becky Sanders

Co-Chair, Palo Alto Neighborhoods

From: [Mimi and Eric Carlson](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Fw: Proposed building at 660 University
Date: Saturday, October 23, 2021 4:46:48 AM

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Begin forwarded message:

From: Jane Hadly <janehadly@icloud.com>
Subject: Fwd: Proposed building at 660 University
Date: October 22, 2021 at 3:17:29 PM PDT
To: City. Council@cityofpalo.org@cityofpalo.org
Cc: jane hadly <janehadly@icloud.com>

Begin forwarded message:

From: jane Hadly
Subject: Proposed building at 660 University
Date: October 25, 2021

CityCouncil@cityofpaloalto.org

I am a resident at 555 Byron. Our attorney, Leigh Prince, has sent you a detailed description of the problems we, as Palo Alto citizens, see. I support her statement .

In addition I want to point out that the property is in the flood zone and their plan to dig 20 or 30 feet should not be accepted. The proposed apartment are too small and the influx of more than 70 additional cars

would be a terrible burden to all.

Middlefield traffic is very dangerous for cars, trucks and bikes as well as pedestrians. The posted speed limits are not normally followed.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jane Hadly

From: [Mimi and Eric Carlson](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Fw: October 25th City Council Agenda, Item 2
Date: Saturday, October 23, 2021 4:34:15 AM

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From: Jane Hadly <janehadly@icloud.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 23, 2021 1:14 AM
To: mimianderic@hotmail.com <mimianderic@hotmail.com>
Cc: jane hadly <janehadly@icloud.com>
Subject: October 25th City Council Agenda, Item 2

Dear Council Member: October 20, 2021:

As a resident living adjacent to 660 University, I do oppose the building under review at 660 University Avenue.

The crowding small apartments, heavy traffic with lacking affordability make this highly undesirable.

Please either greatly reduce the plan or reject it out of hand.

Sincerely,

Jane Hadly
555 Byron Street
Palo Alto. CA 94301

From: [Keith Bennett](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: 660 University Ave, Agenda Item # 2, 10/25/2021
Date: Sunday, October 24, 2021 8:17:18 PM
Attachments: [660 Universtiy Council Comments 21 10 25.rtf](#)
[GHG Emission 660 University Basement Construction.rtf](#)

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To Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,
Attached please find 2 documents from Save Palo Alto's Groundwater
pertaining to Agenda Item #2 on the 10/25/2021 on 660 University Ave.
1) Comments, especially on the green house gas emissions that would
result from building a 2nd level of underground parking, and other
considerations relating to groundwater
2) Detailed calculations.

Thank you in advance for your kind considerations.

--

Keith Bennett
<http://savepaloaltosgroundwater.org>

**Agenda Item #2, 10/25/21 Palo Alto City Council Meeting
Study Session, re: 660 University Ave.**

Comment to Council

Keith Bennett, Save Palo Alto's Groundwater

I am Keith Bennett representing Save Palo Alto's Groundwater. Our interest is solely on impacts of underground construction in areas of high groundwater.

The proposed project at 660 University Ave, includes 2-levels of underground parking covering approximately 90% of the lot. To accommodate this underground parking, the excavation will likely be 25 feet deep, and reach groundwater. Palo Alto's building code requires the building to be sufficiently heavy to keep it from floating at the highest anticipated groundwater depth, which considering groundwater fluctuations and sea level rise would be about 10 feet above the bottom of the sub-structure. Water of this depth covering 90% of the lot will lift 12.8 million pounds. Assuming 3 million pounds for the weight of the 1st level underground parking and above-ground structure, an **additional** 9.8 million pounds of concrete will be required to prevent the building from floating. The CO₂ released by concrete production is about 18% of its weight, which comes to nearly 1.8 million pounds additional CO₂ for the construction of this second parking level.

How much is 1.8 million pounds of CO₂? CO₂ emissions from all residential use of natural gas in Palo Alto totals about 160 million pounds annually; the additional CO₂ emitted for the 2nd level of parking for this single project is 1.1% of **total residential** emissions for a year.

Let's look at this another way. The City is trying to get residents to convert their gas-burning stoves to electric. A typical gas burning range emits about 400 pounds of CO₂ per year. To offset the emissions of this project, 4,500 residential gas ranges would need to be replaced in the year of construction. At \$2,000 to \$4,000 cost per replacement, offsetting these emissions would cost \$9 - \$18 million. The GHG emitted by this basement construction would contribute to climate change essentially forever.

We strongly request not permitting any underground construction exceeding 15 feet below ground surface for this project. Zoning exceptions should not be provided for a project which strongly conflicts with the City's goals to reduce GHG emissions.

Please see the detailed calculations I provided as written comments.

Basement construction in high groundwater areas has other impacts. Dewatering during construction either results in significant pumping and waste of groundwater, a valuable resource, or, with the use of cutoff walls, significant additional CO₂ emission. Secondly, groundwater storage and flows are the largest component in Palo Alto's stormwater management system, in a manner somewhat analogous to the way snow in the Sierras store freshwater. Soils that absorbing rainwater are removed and the underground construction dams groundwater flows, increasing flood risks, especially from atmospheric river rain events.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Basement Construction

October 22, 2021

Save Palo Alto's Groundwater

Keith Bennett, Ph.D.

1. The building must be heavy enough to avoid floating in the groundwater.
Weight of water: 62.4 lbs/ cubic foot
Basement area: 20,000 square feet (including walls)
Basement depth (20 feet to floor + 2 feet slab thickness): 22 feet
Highest transient groundwater level: 15 feet below ground surface
Total weight of building = total weight of water: 20,000 sq. feet x (25 – 15) feet x 62.4 lbs/cu ft = 12.8 million pounds (5,820 metric tons)
Allowance for building weight P1 and above: 1.5 feet of concrete x 13,000 sq. feet = 19,500 cu feet @150 lbs/ft³ = ~3 million pounds
Additional concrete needed to prevent buoyancy: 12.8 – 3.0 million pounds = 9.8 million pounds. (4,450 metric tons)
2. Amount of CO₂ emitted 180 kg/ton
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_impact_of_concrete
3. **Total emission: 4,450 metric ton x 180 kg / ton = 800,000 kg (800 metric tons) of CO₂**

Comparison to residential emissions

1. Total emissions from burning natural gas in all residences (single and multi-family) in Palo Alto: 72,000 metric tons/ year.
2. Fraction of emissions from burning natural gas for **all** residential use from construction of the 2nd level underground parking: 800 metric tons / 72,000 metric tons= 1.1%

Comparison to CO₂ emissions from cooking on a gas stove

1. Amount of natural gas used per year for cooking (per residence): 35 therms
(<https://askinglot.com/what-is-the-average-natural-gas-consumption-per-household>, price per therm \$1.00; 5 – 10% of natural gas consumption for a residence with gas furnace, water and range)
3. CO₂ emitted per therm of natural gas: 5.3 kg/therm
<https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gases-equivalencies-calculator-calculations-and-references>
4. CO₂ emitted by burning natural gas for cooking: 35 therms x 5.3 kg/therm = 186 kg.
5. Equivalent CO₂ emissions for construction of this 2nd level basement: 800,000 kg/186 (kg / range) = 4,300 ranges.

Cost of mitigation of environmental impacts:

- A. Estimated cost to 1 gas range with electric induction range: \$2,000 - \$4,000 per range plus electrical service upgrade (if needed)
- B. Total cost of GHG mitigation for this basement: 4,300 x (\$2,000 - \$4,000) = \$8.6 - \$17+ million + electrical service upgrades.**

- C. Value of water: $20 \text{ million gallons} / 325,000 \text{ (gallon/acre foot)} = 61 \text{ acre-feet}$
Cost of groundwater (Valley Water, Zone W-2): $\$1,499 / \text{acre-foot} \times 61 / \text{acre-foot} = \$91,433$
- D. Total: (B) + (C) = $>\$4,000,000$ per basement in high groundwater area.

From: [Mimi and Eric Carlson](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Fw: 660 University
Date: Sunday, October 24, 2021 4:27:12 PM
Attachments: [660 University.msg](#)

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[Learn why this is important](#)

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

Dear Council Member:

October 21, 2021

As a senior resident living adjacent to 660 University, I oppose the building under review at 660 University Avenue. Crowding, traffic, and lack of affordability make this highly undesirable. Please either reduce the plan greatly or reject it out of hand.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Peter Goodwin". The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

555 Byron St.

Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Council Member:

October 21, 2021

As a senior resident living adjacent to 660 University, I oppose the building under review at 660 University Avenue. Crowding, traffic, and lack of affordability make this highly undesirable. Please either reduce the plan greatly or reject it out of hand.

Sincerely,

Joyce B. Geiduschek

555 Byron St.

Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: slevy@ccsce.com
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Lait, Jonathan](#); [Wong, Tim](#)
Subject: prescreenings tonight
Date: Monday, October 25, 2021 11:24:16 AM
Attachments: [hau.press.release.pdf](#)

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Tonight the council has a chance to signal to the community and HCD that we intend to honor the applicable state housing laws and ABAG RHNA allocation even though many council members did and do not support them.

Tonight's discussion comes on the heels of recent news including 1) the denial of PA's RHNA appeal, 2) the staffing of an expanded state Housing Accountability Unit (see press release) and 3) a growing string of court cases overturning city denials of housing projects for capricious reasons.

Tonight you hear two pre-screenings, both of which come with several requests for exemptions from existing rules regarding adding housing on these properties.

But council members and members of the housing element working group also know now that the only way for PA to meet its legal obligations is to change some rules to allow more housing on existing sites. No math works otherwise.

There can be a major plus for giving the green light to the Amarillo proposal. HCD has been cautious about approving lots of ADUs in new housing elements. But we have an excellent case for doing so and actions past and tonight and in the near term by council will solidify our case for higher ADUs in our HE and I will be happy to plead PA's case before HCD.

the Amarillo project creates 8 units where there were 4, eliminates four cottages renting for near \$4,000 a month, adds ADUs that will be more affordable and adds 4 new smallish SF homes.

Please send HCD and our community a forward going good faith thumbs up despite the usual presence of neighbors dissenting.

The University/Middlefield project should be a slam dunk. 70 units with a 20% BMR, same office space, a lot in downtown that will bring new customers and energy to the council's efforts to create a vibrant downtown.

I look forward hopefully to some positive housing news tonight.

Stephen Levy

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

2020 W. El Camino Avenue, Suite 500
Sacramento, CA 95833
(916) 263-7400
www.hcd.ca.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 19, 2021
Contact: Alex Traverso
916.820.1269
Alex.Traverso@hcd.ca.gov

HCD Strengthens Efforts to Increase Housing Accountability

Welcomes New Leader for Housing Accountability Unit

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) today provided a big boost to its new Housing Accountability Unit (HAU) with the appointment of David Zisser as its new leader. The new Accountability Unit will play a critical role in ensuring that local leaders fulfill their legal responsibility to plan, zone for, and permit their share of the state’s housing needs.

“The Governor has set ambitious housing goals for California, and it’s imperative that we do everything in our power to work with all our partners to achieve those goals,” HCD Director Gustavo Velasquez said. “The appointment of David Zisser will help us amplify and grow our accountability efforts. His vast experience in housing policy will be an enormous benefit to HCD and we are excited to welcome him to the team as the leader of the Housing Accountability Unit.”

Zisser will head up a team charged with expanding on HCD’s accountability work through a holistic strategy that combines: Prohousing incentives and planning grants supporting local jurisdictions to comply with state housing laws; education and technical assistance to help jurisdictions understand the law, and strong accountability actions for non-compliance as needed. He brings more than 14 years of professional experience in local, regional, and statewide housing policy, advocacy, and accountability to HCD, and his appointment comes less than a month after Governor Newsom announced the launch of the HAU at a bill signing ceremony in Oakland.

As part of the 2021-2022 state budget, HCD received new positions to grow its accountability efforts and as part of this expansion was able to form the Housing Accountability Unit with a total of 25 staff. The new team will work to boost the accountability efforts already taking place at HCD. Currently, HCD has the authority to enforce various state housing laws, including: Housing Element Law, including housing element fair housing and program commitments; Housing Accountability Act; No Net Loss Law; Density Bonus Law; Land Use Discrimination Law; Accessory Dwelling Unit laws; Affordable Housing Preservation; Noticing Law; and Surplus Land Act. The HAU will also be empowered to take escalating enforcement steps to bring municipalities into compliance with state housing legislation in the event of persistent non-compliance.

“A housing element is no longer a paper exercise – it’s a contract with the state of housing commitments for eight years and the Housing Accountability Unit will hold jurisdictions to those commitments,” said Megan Kirkeby, HCD Deputy Director for Housing Policy.

While the accountability work is still growing, the existing team has been busy. To date, HCD has issued 253 letters ranging from inquiries, technical assistance, notices of noncompliance, and housing element decertification.

As an example of its success, 320 housing units were approved in September in Norco when the City Council overturned the Planning Commission's original denial of a housing project. Prior to the appeal hearing, HCD provided technical assistance that highlighted the city's commitments in its housing element and obligations under the Housing Accountability Act (HAA).

In another instance, the City of Bakersfield formally welcomed Casa Esperanza, a transitional home for women and their children who have been experiencing homelessness. Technical assistance provided by the Housing Accountability Unit led the City to update its municipal code to properly accommodate transitional and supportive housing, paving the way for Casa Esperanza.

The formation of the Housing Accountability Unit and addition of new staff to this work will allow HCD to more proactively pursue outcome-based resolutions that increase housing supply throughout California.

In addition, starting January 1, 2022, HCD will also have authority to enforce Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing law, The Housing Crisis Act of 2019 – SB 330, Streamlined Ministerial Permit Processes – SB 35, By Right Supportive Housing Provisions – AB 2162, By Right Low Barrier Navigation Centers – AB101, and limitations on development standards – AB 478.

While education and technical assistance is always the first step, the Housing Accountability Unit will hold jurisdictions accountable for their housing element commitments and these other state laws.

David Zisser Bio

David Zisser most recently served as the Associate Director of Housing California, a statewide affordable housing and homelessness advocacy organization. He previously served as Senior Staff Attorney at Public Advocates, where he created a robust practice around Surplus Land Act accountability and led the organization's efforts to **enforce local jurisdictions' obligations to affirmatively further fair housing**. Zisser started his career in local government as a Housing Fellow at the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. He went on to serve as Counsel at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law where he developed a post-Katrina Gulf Coast initiative, working with dozens of local organizations in Louisiana and Mississippi to **hold communities accountable for affordable housing, fair housing, tenant protections, equitable development, and environmental justice**.

#

The California Department of Housing and Community Development is dedicated to the preservation and expansion of safe and affordable housing, so more Californians have a place to call home. Our team works to ensure an adequate supply of housing for Californians and promotes the growth of strong communities through its leadership, policy and program development. For more information, please visit www.hcd.ca.gov and follow us on Twitter, @California_HCD; Facebook, @CaliforniaHCD; and LinkedIn.

From: [Palo Alto Forward](#)
To: [Council, City](#); [DuBois, Tom](#); [Burt, Patrick](#); [Stone, Greer](#); [Tanaka, Greg](#); [Kou, Lydia](#); [Filseth, Eric \(Internal\)](#); [Cormack, Alison](#); [Gail Price](#)
Subject: Item #1 and #2 Study Sessions on Housing Proposals
Date: Monday, October 25, 2021 11:01:02 AM

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[Learn why this is important](#)

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October 25, 2021

Re: Item #1 and #2 Study Sessions on Housing Proposals

Dear Mayor DuBois and Palo Alto Council members,

I am writing on behalf of Palo Alto Forward in support of both housing proposals being studied for pre-screening at tonight's City Council meeting. While these proposals are very different in their scope and composition, both increase the number of homes on their respective sites. As the City considers how to interpret the denial for Palo Alto's RHNA appeal, staff and council should view proposals like these as opportunities to demonstrate our willingness to find solutions that fit our community.

The proposed project at APIC Amarillo Avenue LLC increases housing density while providing a diversity of housing types to serve a variety of incomes. While it does remove some rental housing stock from the market, it provides more and varied housing options for our residents. Further, by supporting this proposal in its current form, Palo Alto can demonstrate the feasibility of gentle density through the increase of ADU production. If we want local control then we need to show how we can make it work.

Agenda Item #2 outlines a PHZ proposal at 660 University that provides 70 homes, including 14 affordable. This mixed-use proposal is exactly what residents have identified as a priority in previous community surveys. There are few locations - downtown and walking distance to Caltrain - better positioned to ensure success for new affordable housing residents. And while the height and parking variance may be a controversial point for some, these changes are aligned with the stated preferences of the Housing Element Working Group and the neighborhood character. The parking ratio per unit should be changed from 2 to 1 or <1 because the site is located adjacent to University Avenue retail, office, commercial, and transit. According to [this Denver-based study](#), locations like this one would diminish reliance on a vehicle and reduce GHG emissions from tenants. The outcome aligns with our climate action goals. Additionally, since the units are small, there may be tenants who do not want or need an assigned space.

These multi-family proposals will yield much needed new homes and align with our RHNA

housing allocation which we strongly support. The recent denial of Palo Alto's RHNA appeal was appropriate and needed. Please provide constructive and clear feedback so that both of these proposals can move forward, as designed, and allow our city to demonstrate our commitment to making housing at all income levels a priority.

Gail A. Price

President, Palo Alto Forward Board