

From: [Jim Colton](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Proposal for Fry's Site
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 9:07:55 AM

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Dear Mayor Burt, Vice Mayor Kou and Council Members

I was surprised and dismayed at the staff's new proposal for development of the Fry's site. We all know that what Palo Alto needs is below market rate housing for service workers, police and fire personnel, teachers and others. We also know that what we don't need more of are office space, luxury housing, more parking problems, more traffic and a bigger burden on our infrastructure. Yet that is what the current proposal gives us. Please reconsider and aim at what Palo Alto needs.

Regards,

Jim Colton
Green Acres II

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JimColtonPhotography.com

From: [Keith Reckdahl](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: NVCAP: Parks
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 8:52:11 AM

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Parks are an important part of Palo Alto's quality of life. To ensure that new residents receive the same park access as existing residents enjoy, we charge new developments an impact fee to fund park acquisition.

The Jan 10 NVCAP Staff Report (packet Page 165) states

"The City could acquire parcels to turn into public parks. However, this is an expensive proposition based on land costs."

and

"The draft preferred alternative is unlikely to generate substantial park impact fees; therefore, additional public subsidy (e.g., bond funds, CIP) will be required to fund acquisition."

When Park Impact Fees last came to Council, I complained that the nexus study's land acquisition costs were inaccurate. With this real-world example, staff has confirmed that our current park impact fees are insufficient to provide new residents with adequate parks.

We will be adding 6000 housing units over the next 8 years, we need to ensure that these residents receive the same park experience as current residents. City Council should prioritize a rigorous evaluation of the actual costs of park acquisition and development.

Thanks,
Keith

From: [Keith Reckdahl](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: NVCAP: Parking
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 8:51:25 AM

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I agree that the City should not blindly build parking, as excessive parking wastes money and space. But we also must base our decisions on data, not on ideological hopes.

The Jan 10 NVCAP Staff Report incorrectly suggests that the Fehr & Peers Parking Study supports lowering parking standards. In fact, the Fehr & Peers study recommends keeping our existing parking standards (except for Senior Housing). See excerpt at bottom of email.

Despite the Fehr & Peers conclusions, the Jan 10 NVCAP Staff Report recommends a drastically lower parking requirement of only 0.5 spot/unit which is less than half of the Fehr & Peers recommendation.

This reckless recommendation is a classic attempt to shift the Overton Window. Staff is proposing an extremely crazy 0.5 spot/unit parking requirement in the hope that we "compromise" and just take a slightly crazy requirement of 1.0 spot/unit. Even that "compromise" is unsupported by Fehr & Peers data. Don't take the bait and fall for a fake "compromise".

If we want to lower parking our requirements, demand data. Task the PTC to perform better surveys. For example:

- The Fehr & Peers street-parking counts had a hard time knowing which street cars belonged to which apartment complex. Instead, examine apartments in RPP neighborhoods. Between midnight surveys and issued RPP permits, we should be able to have a very good idea of parking demand.
- Most complexes require that residents register their cars with apartment management. Request anonymous registration information from complexes.
- Examine DMV registration and census data for Palo Alto to determine car ownership in Palo Alto.

My young coworkers split 3-bedroom apartments, using 3 parking spots. That would crush a 0.5 spot/unit parking requirement. Similarly, before we bought our house, my wife and I lived in a studio but had 2 cars. Those are anecdotal examples, but I suspect very common.

If the 6000 new RHNA units use incorrect parking requirements, we will overwhelm our streets with parked cars. We will lose future flexibility to limit parking to improve bike/ped safety or improve traffic flow. We must insist on data-based policies, not hope-based policies.

Thanks,
Keith

[Reference: Fehr & Peers Parking Study](#)

The Fehr & Peers Executive Summary (from page ES-1 which is packet page 46) <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/agendas-minutes-reports/agendas-minutes/planning-and-transportation-commission/2018-agendas-minutes-and-staff-reports/august-29-2018-framework-for-2018-comp-plan-housing-ordinance.pdf> recommends that the City keep its current parking requirements for Affordable and Market Rate housing, but reduce parking requirements for Senior Housing to 0.75 spaces per unit.

Screenshot from the Fehr & Peers Executive Summary:

Fehr & Peers used the survey results to develop parking supply rates. A conservative approach was taken to develop the rates to reflect community concerns regarding neighborhood parking intrusion.

Affordable Housing:

- 1.0 parking space per studio and per 1-bedroom unit
- 2.0 parking spaces per 2-bedroom or larger unit

Reserved parking, if provided, could be limited to one space per unit to maximize parking space availability.

Market Rate Housing:

- 1.0 parking space per studio and per 1-bedroom unit
- 2.0 parking spaces per 2-bedroom or larger unit

Reserved parking, if provided, could be limited to one space per unit to maximize parking space availability.

Senior Housing:

- 0.75 spaces per unit

From: [Keith Reckdahl](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: NVCAP: Office space per employee
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 8:48:17 AM

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The Jan 10th NVCAP Staff Report (Packet Pg 176) recommends that the City assume 3.4 jobs per 1000 square feet of office (294 SqFt/employee) for its "standard" office density value. However, I consider this to be an extremely inaccurate value (see references below).

If the City uses this number, it will greatly understate the number of employees in office space. This could lead us to accept mixed-used projects which end up worsening our jobs/housing imbalance.

Some people have suggested that COVID may decrease employee density (that is, increase the SqFt/employee). But (anecdotally) I haven't seen that in my work. My work has set up hotel cubes, allowing the same cube to be used by multiple hybrid workers who work on-site on different days. So instead of COVID decreasing employee density, these hotel cubes have actually increased the number of different workers in my building, thus increasing the number of housing units needed to support my office building.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Keith

References for Per-Employee Space Allocation

- During the March 1, 2021 Palo Alto City Council Study Session, the Jay Paul planner stated that in his experience, tech offices typically allocate 165 SqFt/employee.
- The Federal Government's General Service Administration (GSA) 2012 public-sector survey (https://www.gsa.gov/cdnstatic/Workspace_Utilization_Banchmark_July_2012_%281%29.pdf) showed a nationwide average of 190 usable SqFt/employee. The survey also showed the distribution, with 58% of employers allocating 200 SqFt/employee or less, and 25% of employers allocating 150 SqFt/employee or less.
- A Cushman Wakefield analysis (<https://www.cushmanwakefield.com/en/united-states/insights/us-articles/2019-07-dc-open-offices-good-or-bad>) calculated a 2017 nationwide value of 193.8 SqFt/employee.
- The 2019 VTA Bart to San Jose project's Market Analysis and Demand Projections Report (<https://www.vta.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/L-MARK~1.PDF>, page 83) used 200 SqFt/employee for Professional Services & Information offices.
- A Commercial Real Estate Development Association analysis

(<https://www.naiop.org/en/Research-and-Publications/Magazine/2017/Fall-2017/Marketing-Leasing/Trends-in-Square-Feet-per-Office-Employee-An-Update>) showed that the nationwide average had fallen from 197 SqFt/employee in 2010 to 181 SqFt/employee in 2017.

- In September 2021, PGIM Real Estate (<https://realassets.ipe.com/offices/san-francisco-offices-reigniting-the-space-race/10055178.article>) reported that the space per employee is now 150-175 SqFt in San Francisco.

- In December 2020, Levi's recently listed 100,000 SqFt of office space which has seats for 673 employees in San Francisco, which is 149 SqFt/employee (<https://archive.fo/gVttn>)

(end of list)

From: [Don Nielson](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Frys Development
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 3:36:53 AM

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Dear Councilmembers,

It isn't often that you find existing neighborhoods wanting a development that helps meet our obligatory need for affordable housing. Moreover, the City seems unbearably in the grips of developers who fight rather than help produce that same goal. We are sick of overbuilding in Palo Alto and contributing to its unaffordability. Please, please free yourselves from the high-end developer's clutch and help keep this rare opportunity affordable and a compatible part of the Ventura neighborhood!!!

Don Nielson
850 Miranda Green

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Arthur Keller](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: No on Fry's Proposal
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 10:00:52 PM

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Dear Mayor Burt, Vice Mayor Kou, and Council Members:

Please do not accept the current proposal by staff for development of the Fry's site. It doesn't reflect the wishes of many Venturans who have been participating in this multi-year process, the wishes of the Working Group nor your own instructions when Council last considered NVCAP. Please focus on building truly affordable housing and creating a livable, walkable neighborhood with community amenities and excluding high-end office space and luxury housing. Palo Alto always meets its housing goals for at-market or above market rate housing, but always falls short of meeting affordable housing goals. North Ventura provides a real opportunity to solve our below-market housing needs.

Best regards.
Arthur

From: [Kirsten Flynn](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: NVCAP
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 9:48:26 PM

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Honorable City Council,

Thank you for your service. I appreciate your efforts in these very difficult and changing times.

Thank you also to city staff for the staff report, it does a very good job explaining the realities of the development climate and the trade offs chosen. It incorporates many of the goals of the working group. Not all, but guess what, we all need to accommodate the greater good. The housing affordability crisis will not be solved without some density and relaxation of parking regulations, but we need to focus on keeping our park ratios.

I was pleased by some relaxation of the height limits, which facilitate more affordable housing, for the following reason. If you divide the cost of the land, by the number of units, you get the base land cost of each unit. Then add the cost of building the unit. if there are 6 units per acre (typical single family house zoning) each unit is already 200k before it is built. If you are 40 units per acre, (typical townhomes or condos) the units are more affordable.

I love that they are boosting the REQUIRED income tied BMR (below market rate) percentage in condos and townhomes (owned units) to 20% rather than the current 15%. Great progress, thank you, and please keep this in the plan

Secondly, I like that they are prioritizing ground floor retail at several locations in the plan. the additional density is essential to make this retail viable, as they estimate that a new housing units can each support about 15 square feet of retail (assuming each new family spends about 25% of their shopping budget locally.) so for a 1000 sf retail location, you need 66 local housing units.

Finally, on the positive, I think that the parking ratios are very reasonable. Minimum .5 parking space per bedroom, maximum 1 parking space per bedroom, up to 2 parking spaces, with bicycle parking at one space/unit. They have done parking surveys, and this is what is typically used in parking garages of condo and townhome complexes. Our neighborhood is an excellent place to not have a car, with the train and bike boulevard. Additionally, parking spaces are super expensive to built, so if you require 2 parking spaces for each apartment or townhouse, they now will cost an additional 100k per unit.

However, I plan to continue being very vocal about the need to keep to the city's own stated standards about the ration of parkland acres per resident. If our neighborhood is likely to grow by more than 530 units, we need to have parkland at a ratio in line with the cities comprehensive plan. As the staff report says "2.0 to 5.2 acres of parkland could be developed, under the realistic and maximum buildout scenarios, respectively. This equates to

1.6 acres/1,000 residents to 1.7 acres/1,000 residents, under realistic and maximum buildout, respectively. This range does not meet the 4 acres/1,000 residents aspired to in the Comprehensive Plan.” WE DESERVE BETTER. I believe we should continue to advocate for the maximum creek naturalization plan, and additional small parks and plazas in any development plan. If we are going to absorb density for the city, we need parks!

Additionally, I think the neighborhood will have to be vigilant to make sure that every effort will be made to preserve the most historic aspects of the 340 Portage historic cannery building. It is easy to destroy a sense of place, it is hard to create it once it has been erased.

I am not sure if I will be able to attend the city council meeting, my elder care responsibilities have been turned up to 11 (that is one more than 10) That is one of the things about living in your home town, your parents and in-laws also live there!

Thanks for reading,
Best regards,
Kirsten

650-855-9464
cell 650-387-3329

From: [Mary Gallagher](#)
To: [Council_City](#)
Subject: Housing for All
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 9:43:06 PM

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Dear Mayor Burt, Vice Mayor Kou, and Council Members:

When leaders are among the power elite, they may fail to see the plight of the poor. Please open your eyes and your minds, to support the building of housing that is affordable for lower income residents--our veterans, seniors, and the disabled--on the Fry's site.

Stop the greed. How much more money do developers need? I imagine developers may wish to pave the Bay if it were not for our wetland and endangered species laws. Unbridled greed has no boundaries. Please do not accept the current proposal by staff for development of the Fry's site. The proposal does not reflect the wishes of many Ventura Neighborhood residents, the wishes of the Working Group nor your own instructions when Council last considered NVCAP. Please focus on building truly affordable housing and creating a livable, walkable neighborhood with community amenities. Palo Alto has enough high-end office space and luxury housing--but not enough affordable housing.

How many more RVs and homeless folks pushing carts or sleeping on cardboard do city leaders and developers need to see before you realize, the Fry's parcel in the North Ventura Neighborhood provides a real and rare opportunity to add to our below-market housing inventory? What more may I/we say or do to make building affordable housing on the Fry's site a reality?

Thank you,

Mary Gallagher, B.Sc.,
A Ventura Neighborhood Resident

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Mary Gallagher, B.Sc.
Aquatics Professional
650-683-7102 (cell)

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From: [Susan Kemp](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Development of the Fry's Site - Please do not accept the current staff proposal
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 8:11:29 PM

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Dear Mayor Burt, Vice Mayor Kou, and Council Members:

Please do not accept the current proposal by staff for development of the Fry's site. It doesn't reflect the wishes of many Venturans who have been participating in this multi-year process, the wishes of the Working Group nor your own instructions when Council last considered NVCAP. Please focus on building truly affordable housing and creating a livable, walkable neighborhood with community amenities (including parks) and excluding high-end office space and luxury housing. Though Palo Alto always meets its housing goals for at-market or above market rate housing, it falls short of meeting affordable housing goals. North Ventura provides a real opportunity to solve our below-market housing needs.

Thank you.
Susan Kemp
Ventura

From: [Angela Dellaporta](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: NVCAP
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 6:26:50 PM

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Dear City Council,

The Comprehensive Plan recommendations were written to apply to all areas of Palo Alto – not just the most privileged areas. The naturalization of Matadero Creek is a popular and positive plan. However, it does not provide the public park space that would be necessary to serve the needs of a population increase of 1,600 people.

According to the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, the City Council has an obligation to provide 4 acres of public park/1,000 residents.

To blithely ignore those recommendations, and assume that less than half the prescribed amount is acceptable for Palo Alto residents who will live in apartments without their own backyards, is simply wrong.

Bike paths, woonerfs and plazas are all great – but they absolutely cannot take the place of public parks.

Palo Alto is full of extremely wealthy individuals and businesses. There are many ways to finance the purchase of park land and I know that you can figure it out if you choose to.

Angela Dellaporta
Erstwhile NVCAP co-chair

From: [Noah Fiedel](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Feedback about the Ventura plan
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 4:53:13 PM

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Dear Mayor Burt, Vice Mayor Kou, and Council Members,

I've read the staff proposal and it does a great disservice to your greatest constituents, the residents of Palo Alto. Pages 9-11 make no mention of actually enforcing the current and long-standing RM-30 zoning! All of the discussion centers around the wants of activist developer property-owners, while specifically mentioning "high lease values of office uses". What they do not mention is the high negative externalities to the community, and the missed opportunity cost, by continuing to let developers push for office space over housing.

1. Our city has the highest jobs to housing ratio in the nation. If anything, we should be pausing new office construction everywhere.
2. This site has been zoned RM-30 for decades. The developers knew this in advance, and have no claim of "poverty" to justify overriding city zoning. It's purely a profit grab.
3. Office space, with our already imbalanced ratio, has only negative externalities to our community: More traffic, More speeding, Less property taxes (due to how commercial properties abuse prop-13 to rarely re-assess), Less good neighbors, etc.
4. Missed opportunity cost: More residents in this corridor would encourage retail & walkable neighborhoods. It's close to California Ave, Caltrain, and the (nascent) retail on Park.

As a longstanding resident of Palo Alto, I simply ask that you enforce the current residential zoning! Please do not allow for further "amortization", which has shown already to be a delay & stall tactic for developers to try and extract more profit, while waiting for a more office-developer-friendly council in the future. Ok to do this for newly zoned residential, but not 340 Portage/already RM-30 areas. I do support some light, community serving retail along the edges to make this a great walkable neighborhood. But no/zero offices please.

Thank you,
Noah Fiedel
Ventura Neighborhood