

From: [Carol Scott](#)
To: [Council, City; Shikada, Ed](#)
Subject: Plans for North Venture Development
Date: Monday, October 24, 2022 2:38:40 PM

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Dear Council Members and City Manager,

I urge you to listen carefully to the concerns expressed by Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN) in their communications to you.

The members of this organization know this area better than anyone. They are not NIMBYS who want no additional housing in their neighborhood. Instead, they welcome appropriate development that will not destroy their community. If you have ever traveled through the streets of this area, you know how incredibly tight they are -- as narrow as those in Southgate -- and how packed with cars parking on both sides of the street they are. You know that there are limited streets providing a way in and out of the neighborhood. Putting a massive development there with no plan for traffic and no plan for the cars that will be there is not wise. While hopefully people will make fewer trips in their cars, they will own cars (necessary for many trips because of our poor mass transit opportunities) and they have to go somewhere. People in this neighborhood need sunlight and open space just as the rest of Palo Alto. We do not need more office space.

Please consider the proposed agreed with Sobrato carefully. Work toward an adaptation that will work well for the community as well as for Sobrato. This one of the last "affordable" neighborhoods in Palo Alto. Please do not turn it into a jumbled mess.

Thank you.
Carol Scott
Evergreen Park

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Carol Scott

From: [David Adams](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: NVCAP review 10/24/2022
Date: Monday, October 24, 2022 8:45:31 AM
Attachments: [preferredPlan.png](#)
[packet.png](#)

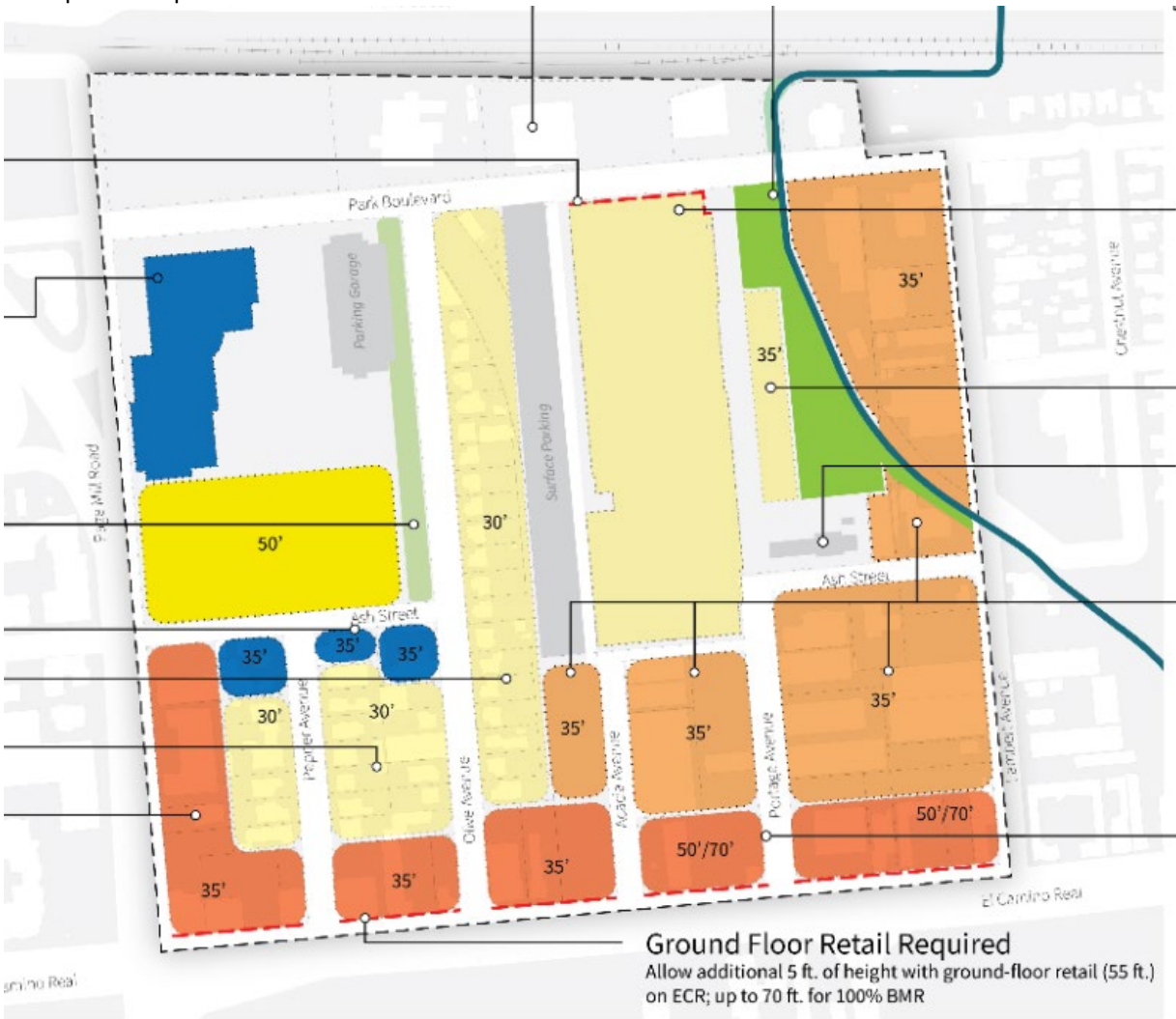
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Honourable members of the council,

I have a comparison of the draft NVCAP plan preferred by council on 01/10/22 and the plan in staff report for 10/24/2022.

Draft preferred plan:



Staff report 10/24/2022:



Allowable Heights Legend:

Dark Blue	55 Feet (65 Feet for 100% Below Market Rate Housing)
Medium Blue	45 Feet
Light Green	35 Feet
Bright Green	30 Feet
Diagonal Hatching	N/A (Open Space)

It's interesting to note that the heights along El Camino and Oregon have increased even beyond the city wide 50ft height limit. I've been following NVCAP since the beginning and I cannot recall council directing staff to do this. It seems quite unfair to Ventura in general, and the occupants of the houses adjacent to these buildings in particular, that NVCA should have a higher limit than the rest of the city.

I would appreciate if the council would direct staff to bring all heights in NVCA into conformance with the 50ft height limit for the rest of the city. No exceptions.

Thanks and regards
 David Adams
 Olive Ave

From: [Gail Price](#)
To: [Council, City; Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Lait, Jonathan; Wong, Tim; Shikada, Ed](#)
Subject: Palo Alto Forward Letter: Agenda Item No. 9. NVCAP Refined Preferred Alternative
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 4:36:58 PM

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October 24, 2022.

Re: Agenda Item No. 9
Review the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP) Refined Preferred Alternative,

Dear Mayor Burt, Palo Alto City Council Members, and Planning and Transportation Commission Members,

Palo Alto Forward is a non-profit organization focused on innovating and expanding housing choices and transportation for a vibrant, welcoming, and sustainable Palo Alto. We are a broad coalition with a multi-generational membership, including new and long time residents.

We do not support the endorsement of the NVCAP Refined Preferred Alternative. After three years of study and analysis and significant cost, the Refined Preferred Alternative is woefully inadequate.

The 60-acre area is a unique opportunity that has now been lost. However, since the process took so long, some property owners and developers have proceeded with projects which will limit a systematic and comprehensive planning approach including the potential use of a specific or precise plan. The proposal before you lacks vision and fails to incorporate innovation and appropriate planning principles to meet current and future housing and social needs.

As noted by consultants, staff, and numerous community members these principles/techniques are widely known: a coordinated variety of land uses and assembly incentives, sufficient office and retail and jobs, revised development standards (density, height, and design guidelines), workable incentives and options to create sufficient funding for community benefits for the neighborhood, less vehicle parking to support sustainability and enhance mobility while resulting in a marked increase in affordable and middle-income units. All of which could be included in a precise or specific plan.

In the earlier phases of the NVCAP process, Alternative 3B was identified by the consultant and staff as the most financially feasible yet that finding was dismissed by many members of the Working Group and the City Council.

It should be recognized that the proposed NVCAP Objectives (Pages 182-3) repeatedly note the importance of financial feasibility and market conditions in Objectives 1 and 5.

Alternative 3B would have created or phased in 1800-2200 units throughout the area. Such intensification would have helped finance many more community benefits and made the area cohesive and high functioning.

For example, the Preferred Refined Alternative in the staff report notes that NVCAP existing and new housing units will provide a total of only 620 Units (143 of which are currently existing).

The design and varied heights of Alternative 3B could have been visually impressive while incorporating the best of new technology and environmental stewardship. And importantly, such an alternative would have enabled us to help meet our RHNA goal while providing needed current and future housing. Our concern is that by not using this opportunity the City's Housing Element will be seen as out of compliance by the State.

Another troubling outcome has been the likely loss of MTC grant opportunities for Transit Oriented Communities (TOC). The proposed development potential of NVCAP Refined Preferred Alternative is not aligned

with the MTC TOC policies (including minimum residential and office densities and residential and commercial parking limits), makes the NVCAP area not eligible for a grant. Alternative 3B would have been more aligned.

As the staff report notes, NVCAP is located within a designated Planned Development Area (PDA). Approved legislation AB2097 effective January 1, 2023 will reduce parking requirements in PDA's located near

transit options. This will help us reach our climate action goals.

NVCAP could have been an asset to the City because it is adjacent to a commercial/retail corridor and fixed rail and transit and could have been be a model of sustainability. The area could have been a local and subregional hub for housing, jobs, services, art and culture, entertainment, and recreation. With the current Refined Preferred Alternative, that holistic opportunity is lost for generations.

It is unfortunate that the City Council did not support a more bold, robust, and ambitious Refined Preferred Alternative for the NVCAP. With all the innovation and future-thinking in Palo Alto, our City deserves more.

With this alternative we are looking to the past and not the future. We are disappointed. This is a lost opportunity for our community.

Sincerely,

Palo Alto Forward Board

From: [Rebecca Sanders](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Furman, Sheri](#)
Subject: NVCAP Proposal Not Responsive to Council and Residents
Date: Friday, October 21, 2022 3:04:28 PM

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Dear Mayor Burt and City Council Members:

I am sending this letter on behalf of the Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN) Executive Committee in response to the staff report concerning the NVCAP Refined Preferred Plan Update on your agenda for this Monday. We believe the staff report does not reflect the NVCAP goals and objectives as outlined on Packet Page 182 and 183, nor deliver on the promises of the NVCAP Working Group's various proposals, all of which called for a livable, bike-able, walkable community with amenities that are a welcome addition to the Ventura neighborhood.

In short, the proposal imposes on residents:

- significant negative impacts on existing homes
- big city housing density at 2.5 times what is allowed in other parts of Palo Alto
- worse parking
- worse traffic
- more offices when fewer were promised
- less truly affordable housing than is needed

1. Packet page 170: The proposed Sobrato agreement is not fully explained. In particular, the Sobrato agreement ups the amount of R&D whereas NVCAP's stated goal (packet page 172) is to decrease offices by a considerable amount

2. Packet page 170-171: The Transit Oriented Communities policies in Table 2 are incompatible with our city's stated goals. For example, a 2.0 FAR for offices would preclude conversion to residential. 4.0 FAR hands us gridlock. Additionally, these FARs are incompatible with our office cap and the need to reduce our jobs/housing imbalance. We urge that Council opt out of the TOC program.

3. Packet page 171: If the housing element proposes to add 348 units to NVCAP, why then does this proposal suggest adding $670 - 142 = 528$ units (see packet page 172)? The proposal suggests adding to this site 52% more than the housing element has identified should be built there. Why should so much new housing be concentrated in one neighborhood?

4. Packet page 172: The low-rise greenway looks to be about 2.0 FAR At 107 units per acre (43,560 sq. ft.) and as 25% is for shared hallways, stairs, lobby, utilities, amenities, etc., each

unit is about 650 sq. ft. – a bit bigger than a three-car garage. So, this is not family housing, which is what Palo Alto needs. It would be helpful if the typologies described unit sizes, so we ensure we're getting family and not dormitory housing.

5. Packet page 173: Figure 2 doesn't seem to reflect the Sobrato agreement or protect residences next to buildings on El Camino. It also doesn't reflect any phase-out of existing office buildings along Park.

6. Packet page 174: provides for in lieu fees rather than for providing much needed housing for those working in lower-paid jobs. We need housing at low AMIs, not at the 120% "BMR" level.

7. Packet pages 174+ - Height and Massing Near Existing Residential

- Why don't we allow tall residential buildings next to the train tracks to encourage offices there to convert to residential? These plans show those buildings as limited to 35 feet, which makes no sense.

- The plan shows 45 feet height next to R-1 homes (which it claims as 30 feet in height) behind El Camino. Most of these homes are not 30 feet tall. Most windows in a R-1 home are no more than 15 or so feet above grade. So, putting a 45-foot building next door is catastrophic to privacy, daylight, and enjoyment.

- Council already voted recently to retain the 30 foot height limit for this situation, so Council should reject the new proposal to raise it to 45 feet in North Ventura.

8. Page 175 reports that an alley will separate the 45-foot buildings from the residential buildings, but Figure 3 clearly shows the 45-foot buildings next to homes with no alley separation.

9. Packet page 176: Removing parking seems shortsighted at this point, given that much of Ventura is filled with cars at night.

10. Packet page 177: Park Land

- The Council motion said to "Develop preferred park locations" (plural) but only one location seems to be offered.

- There's nothing in the staff report about planting more trees and creating a more desirable community. The "woonerf" (living street) doesn't necessarily provide green space but simply treats the road as a walkway, albeit with cars still going by on it.

11. Packet pages 177-178: Offices

- Office zoning and policies are perhaps the most critical aspect as the goal should be to phase these out and replace them with housing. The sooner we begin, the sooner it will happen.

- The staff report however does not discuss any amortization schedule. It also does not explain how the Table 3 reductions in office space will be achieved.

12. Packet page 179: The notion under Commercial Parking Ratio of exempting the first 1,500 sq. ft. of ground floor commercial area seems imprudent, given that this neighborhood is already underparked. And it creates problems for potential retail tenants; witness the old North Face retail store on Alma that reportedly has difficulty finding new tenants because it is underparked.

13. Packet page 179: The staff report says that the Council's direction to limit the occupancy of office buildings won't work and proposes instead to use a TDM (Transportation Demand Management) program to limit single-occupant vehicle trips, relying on "annual reporting to ensure compliance." But office occupants will have no incentive to be accurate about their vehicle trips and the City will have no way to check if the reporting is honest. So, such reporting will not ensure compliance. We've never heard that the City has ever successfully enforced any TDM. If you can't restrict the number of people in an office, let's instead immediately start amortizing away the amount of office space.

Considering these concerns, please address these issues in your discussion Monday night and help forge a plan for North Ventura that truly converts it into a livable and pleasant residential community like others in our city, with historical preservation of the cannery, adequate parkland and plantings, and meaningful protections for current residents.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Becky Sanders
Sheri Furman
Co-Chairs
Palo Alto Neighborhoods

From: [Angela Dellaporta](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Proposal for 3200 Park/Portage
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 1:22:59 PM

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Dear City Council and PTC Members:

As a member of the NVCAP Working Group, I want to be very clear that I strongly support development in the entire NVCAP area, including 3200 Park, 340 Portage and 200 Portage. However, the current proposal for development of the area appears to me to meet none of the needs of this city.

The Working Group recognized and supported the continued need for housing in Palo Alto, and envisioned a thriving community including neighborhood serving retail; convivial eating establishments alongside a naturalized creek; cultural events; and housing that would serve residents of many different income levels.

The Working Group vision for the North Ventura area has the potential to make it a center of culture and community — a jewel for Palo Alto. While land prices in the Bay Area make it difficult to build here, I believe that if other communities can manage it, Palo Alto can too.

In contrast, the proposal made recently features: unneeded office space; a tiny spot of retail; very little housing; and strict segregation of market rate and below-market-rate units.

I wish I understood exactly why the council is seriously considering wasting the wonderful potential of the area.

While the details of the process have not been transparent, we are under the impression that some council members were afraid that there might be a threat of a lawsuit if certain parties were not allowed to make as much money as they pleased. Is that how the council must make its decisions these days? Are we utterly in the thrall of developers' profits?

Does the council feel so powerless that they are willing not only to sacrifice the quality of life in Palo Alto, but also willing to defer the urgent need for housing and to ignore state mandates?

If, on the other hand, the council is not acting out of fear of a lawsuit, perhaps they will clarify exactly what their viable vision for the area is, what the benefits are to the city, and how they might make that vision a reality.

Hoping that developers' bottom lines are not the deciding factor in the growth of Palo Alto,

Angela Dellaporta