

**From:** [Natalie Geise](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item #8 - Development of Parking & Downtown Housing Proposals  
**Date:** Monday, December 11, 2023 12:28:36 PM

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Mayor Kou and Honorable City Council,

I am thrilled to see the agenda item tonight considering affordable housing for seniors, teachers, and workers on city-owned parking lots downtown. The severe lack of housing affordability in our community is evidenced by the fact that the median Palo Alto home sales price in 2021 was more than two and a half times that of the County median. As a result of the high housing costs, *14% of households in Palo Alto are severely cost burdened* and paying more than 50 percent of income to housing.

Building explicitly affordable projects is one tool to address the crisis. Putting forth projects on city-owned land allows us to say that as a city, we are serious about finding solutions and prioritizing affordable housing.

As you consider the item tonight, I encourage you to create a larger canvas for Alta and Mid-Pen housing to paint a vision onto. I want to let Alta and Mid-Pen paint a bold vision with more options, more units, and better cost drivers. **Please create a larger envelope for affordable housing proposals on our city-owned sites in downtown and:**

- raise the maximum height to 85+ ft**
- raise the maximum FAR to 5.0+**
- reduce parking minimums**

Natalie Geise  
Palo Alto Resident

**From:** [slevy@ccsce.com](mailto:slevy@ccsce.com)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Lait, Jonathan](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda item 8 on housing and parking  
**Date:** Monday, December 11, 2023 11:00:13 AM

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Dear Mayor Kou and council members,

I support more housing for low-income residents in DTN where I live.

I appreciate the decision to contribute the land at minimal cost.

DTN is a great area for these residents (close to services, shopping, jobs and transit) and for our HE (more broadly distributing new housing for low-income residents).

I do not know enough to suggest the parameters for these projects BUT I do know the right process to use because the council just used it for the ECR focus area.

Please engage with Alta and MidPen and others if they come forward on what is needed in terms of height, FAR and other development standards as I am pretty sure they will meet or exceed what was adopted (thank you) for the ECR focus area.

My second wish is that the city move quickly to expand the number of these projects DTN as both Alta and MidPen suggested several DTN sites they were interested in moving forward on asap.

Thank you

Stephen Levy

**From:** [Danny Warren Sallis](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Support for affordable housing ordinances  
**Date:** Monday, December 11, 2023 10:49:43 AM

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Hello,

My name is Danny Sallis. I am a current student at Stanford and a member of Students for Workers' Rights and the Stanford Coalition for Planning an Equitable 2035. Given tonight's considerations, I would like to express my support for affordable housing.

In order to meet the massive need in the area, we need housing to be built at high densities. Large buildings should be considered to accommodate these needs. Housing downtown will help support the the many working nearby.

Thank you!

Best wishes,  
Danny Sallis

**From:** [City Mgr](#)  
**To:** [Lait, Jonathan](#); [Paras, Christine](#); [Nose, Kiely](#); [Ramberg, David](#); [French, Amy](#); [Kamhi, Philip](#)  
**Cc:** [Gaines, Chantal](#); [McDonough, Melissa](#); [Shikada, Ed](#); [Clerk, City](#); [Velasquez, Ingrid](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Avenidas & City of Palo Alto Parking In-Lieu Fees  
**Date:** Monday, December 11, 2023 10:37:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Good morning—

Please find below public comment regarding item 8 (Direction to Pursue Development of New Parking and Refined Proposals for Housing in the University Avenue Downtown and Development Goals for Housing Investment. CEQA Status – Not a Project.)

This message was sent to CMO general inbox and individual Council emails. Forwarding as FYI only.

Thank you,  
Danille

**Danille Rice**

Administrative Assistant  
Office of the City Manager | Human Resources

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**From:** Amy Yotopoulos <ayotopoulos@avenidas.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 8, 2023 12:00 PM  
**To:** City Mgr <CityMgr@cityofpaloalto.org>; City Attorney <city.attorney@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Burt, Patrick <Pat.Burt@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Lauing, Ed <Ed.Lauing@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Stone, Greer <Greer.Stone@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Veenker, Vicki <Vicki.Veenker@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Kou, Lydia <Lydia.Kou@CityofPaloAlto.org>; kou.pacc@gmail.com; Lythcott-Haims, Julie <Julie.LythcottHaims@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Tanaka, Greg <Greg.Tanaka@CityofPaloAlto.org>; greg@gregtanaka.org  
**Cc:** David Gordon <dsgordon1@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Avenidas & City of Palo Alto Parking In-Lieu Fees

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Dear City Manager Shikada, City Attorney Stump, City of Palo Alto Council Liaison Lauing, Mayor Kou, & Members of the Palo Alto City Council:

As you may know, when Avenidas remodeled the building on 450 Bryant Street in September 2017, **we paid over \$1.9M in parking in-lieu fees.** The money was raised as part of our grassroots capital campaign to support the building's renovation to modernize the space to better serve our community and to bring it up to code -- community members from Palo Alto and beyond contributed generously. When any action is being considered for these funds, **our hope is that the City will consult with Avenidas on how those funds are being earmarked.** As a charitable, not-for-profit

organization devoted to serving seniors since 1969, it is important that we report back to our community members about how their donations have been used.

As a longstanding partner of the City's with a track record of collaboration with community-focused organizations like La Comida and Downtown Palo Alto Farmers' Market, we would like to understand the City's plans for disbursement of these parking in-lieu fees, including the possibility of returning those funds, in light of the recent ruling by the 6<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals/Santa Clara County Superior Court.

We noticed that the [December 11 City Council meeting](#) features an action item related to this issue -- "Direction to Pursue Development of New Parking and Refined Proposals for Housing in the University Avenue Downtown and Development Goals for Housing Investment" -- which has implications for the use of the parking in-lieu fees. We met with Ed Shikada on November 22 and Ed Lauing on December 7, and we also want to ensure that all of you were aware that Avenidas has a vested interest in these funds.

We look forward to learning more about the City's plans for parking in the downtown area and collaborating with the City regarding the parking in-lieu fees that Avenidas paid. We're confident in a mutually positive conclusion.

In partnership,  
Amy Yotopoulos  
Avenidas President & CEO

and

David Gordon  
Avenidas Board Chair



**From:** [Hamilton Hitchings](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Lait, Jonathan](#)  
**Subject:** Housing Over Parking Agenda Item Input  
**Date:** Monday, December 11, 2023 10:13:58 AM

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Dear Council,

As a former member of the HEWG I wanted to share a few thoughts:

- These projects provide much lower cost housing because they are using city lands and are non-profit housing builders.
- It's important that the bidders maximize the amount of outside money they can bring to these projects so we can build more BMR housing in Palo Alto.
- I support staff's well thought out recommendation of narrowing the target sites to rectangular lots and starting with Lot T (Lytton & Kipling) followed by lot C (Lytton & Ramona) as well.
- Many homeless and low income folks live in their cars and/or that is their fallback. In addition, many rely on them to commute to work in other towns so it's important we provide sheltered parking for their cars.
- They are also more likely to house share out of fiscal necessity thus increasing the number of cars per unit.
- In addition, remote parking is less safe for these residents late at night, and also encourages them to park in spots on the street after 3 pm, which then reduces evening parking supply.
- Before the pandemic many lots were at full parking capacity and combined with the lack of parking for new high density buildings going forward, it's critical we plan for that.
- Otherwise lack of parking will become a constraint slowing downtown housing densification.
- Thus I request council require these projects to build underground parking on all of

these housing and parking garage sites. We can not underutilize this valuable space.

- The city should subsidize the delta cost between above ground and below ground parking from the downtown parking fund, Measure K funds, infrastructure funds or wherever is most convenient for this project.
- I also support staff's thoughts on reserving lot A (Emerson & Lytton) for parking which is already being used at 100% at noon and 6pm daily and lot D (Hamilton & Waverly) which is already over 80% utilization at noon and 6 pm.
- In summary, the goals of low income housing, parking and the health of retail are supported and mutually complementary given the approach stated.

Hamilton Hitchings

**From:** [Jimmy Stoyell](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** As much housing as possible for seniors, teachers, and workers on city parking lots!  
**Date:** Sunday, December 10, 2023 8:40:08 PM

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Hello,

I'm writing to support as much housing as possible on the proposed plans for development on city parking lots. We need as much housing as we can in Palo Alto, particularly for those with lower income, and the area is a fantastic place for it - near transit and services. Please, act quickly and streamline the process for as much housing as possible!

Thank you,

James Stoyell



**From:** [Palo Alto Forward](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Cc:** [Nose, Kiely](#); [Tong, Sunny](#)  
**Subject:** 12/11 - Item #8 - Housing on City Parking Lots  
**Date:** Sunday, December 10, 2023 12:57:32 PM  
**Attachments:** [CC Item #8 Housing Parking Lots.pdf](#)

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Honorable City Council,

Please find our attached letter regarding Monday's Council Agenda Item #8 - Housing on City Parking Lots.

Thank you,

--

Amie Ashton  
Executive Director, Palo Alto Forward  
650-793-1585



December 10, 2023

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item #8 - Development of Parking & Downtown Housing Proposals**

Mayor Kou and Honorable City Council,

Palo Alto Forward is writing in general support of dense housing on downtown parking lots. We are so excited to see this project moving forward. It cannot happen fast enough!

**Maximize the development potential of these parking lots with a minimum allowed height of at least 85 and floor area ratio (FAR) of at least 5.0. And we urge you to think even bigger – why not 150+ feet and FARs of 10.0.** Additionally, please consider lowering parking ratios to 0.5 per unit, consistent with other affordable projects that have been allowed to proceed by Council, which would enhance the development's overall potential for success.

**Allowing a larger envelope for development means even more affordable units on these sites - especially desperately needed affordable housing for area workers, families, and seniors.** We should demonstrate our commitment to affordability (one Council's top goals since 2021) by allowing larger projects. As we have seen with the San Antonio corridor and El Camino Focus Area, we are gaining public acceptance of higher heights, greater FARs, and lower parking ratios because our housing need is so great.

**Tall buildings are not uncommon in our downtown.** The following is a list of several that are within 0.5 mile of city parking lots, and note that each one has a one- or two-story structure immediately adjacent to it.

- 525 University Avenue - 237 feet
- Channing House - 142 feet
- Palo Alto City Hall - 122 feet
- 535 Everett Ave - 85 feet
- Hotel President - 90 feet
- 101 Alma - 140 feet
- The Marc - 165 feet
- 325 Forest - 65 feet
- 360 Forest - 77 feet

A maximized building envelope would also show the State Department of Housing and Community Development that we are serious about meeting our Housing Element goals. It would also show that we are serious about Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing spreading units across the city.

**Our housing need is so dire, especially for affordable units - and we have one shot at these sites. Let's be bold and meet our housing challenges!**

Sincerely,

Amie Ashton,  
Executive Director and on behalf of the Board of Directors  
Palo Alto Forward

**From:** [Jo Ann Mandinach](#)  
**To:** [Lythcott-Haims, Julie](#)  
**Cc:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Re: affordable housing developments at city parking lots  
**Date:** Saturday, December 9, 2023 10:25:06 AM

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Julie, thanks for your reply but I don't appreciate your "have you stopped beating your spouse and dog" framing of the issues.

I'm for affordable housing, not buying market rate housing for highly paid techies as per their deep-pocketed backers which is what the housing laws require for **80%** (or more) of the new housing.

I'm against destroying retail and the character of our community to build more \$4K apartments, especially when the deep-pocketed backers can spend literally HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS of dollars lobbying against paying their gig workers benefits, unemployment, etc.

Why do you think there are so many homeless?

Are you aware that EACH of the big tech companies has settled with TENS OF THOUSANDS of minorities, women, older workers for discriminating against them SO they can hire cheaper foreign workers?

Why aren't you lobbying for WORKER protections and to change the labor laws?

Due to the changing economy and the new huge state deficit and the massive layoffs, I oppose destroying our community to benefit the billionaires screwing workers to enrich themselves.

I'm appalled that we're barred from reconsidering RHNA targets in the face of the new realities. Are Newsom and Bonta running a dictatorship or trying to get us to vote Independent or for the GOP?

I oppose sticking housing on transit parking lots because then the rest of us have nowhere to park when taking public transit.

I oppose having a biased Planning Department with its leg on the scale for big money and developers. I know you oppose oversight for city workers so you can focus on the "big" issues but suggest you take a closer look here at home and how the CITY governs since you're a member of the CITY council.

I must have missed your speaking out for the workers or preserving what makes /made Palo Alto interesting,

Again, thanks for your response.

Jo Ann

On Sat, Dec 9, 2023 at 4:29 AM Lythcott-Haims, Julie

<[Julie.LythcottHaims@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:Julie.LythcottHaims@cityofpaloalto.org)> wrote:

Hi Jo Ann, thanks for writing us. Are you against the affordable housing? or are you against parking lots being taken up for affordable housing? And if the latter, would you be OK with affordable housing developdeveloped along with parking?

Julie

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 8, 2023, at 11:17 AM, Jo Ann Mandinach <[joann@needtoknow.com](mailto:joann@needtoknow.com)> wrote:

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Please stop destroying downtown access for potential shoppers by eliminating parking,

If you can't / won't do that, fire all your "retail consultants" since the answer to why retail is suffering here is painfully obvious.

Save us some money on these consults who have no local knowledge and save a few merchants, too.

Most sincerely,  
Jo Ann Mandinach  
PA, CA 94301

**From:** [Jo Ann Mandinach](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#); [City Mgr](#)  
**Subject:** affordable housing developments at city parking lots  
**Date:** Friday, December 8, 2023 11:17:30 AM

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Please stop destroying downtown access for potential shoppers by eliminating parking,

If you can't / won't do that, fire all your "retail consultants" since the answer to why retail is suffering here is painfully obvious.

Save us some money on these consults who have no local knowledge and save a few merchants, too.

Most sincerely,  
Jo Ann Mandinach  
PA, CA 94301

**From:** [Rhonda Bekkedahl](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda item: Affordable Housing in Downtown Palo Alto  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 6, 2023 6:43:12 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[23.12.06 Letter to Council for Affordable Housing.pdf](#)

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I am attaching my letter to the Mayor and All City Council members.

Please add to your consideration of this important issue.

Thank you.

Rhonda Bekkedahl

CEO & Executive Director

650.324.7596 Direct



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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

Thank you.



December 6, 2023

Dear Madame Mayor and Council Members:

I am writing in support of using downtown parking lots to build subsidized, affordable housing.

I am the CEO of Channing House where 175 hard-working individuals are employed in positions such as housekeeping, dining services, maintenance, and nursing assistants. While these employees provide critical services to the 250 long-time residents of Palo Alto who now reside at Channing House, their wages do not provide the opportunity to live in Palo Alto without more affordable housing options.

Our employees find it necessary to commute further and further distances in order to afford adequate housing for their families. This exacerbates the staffing challenges that we are already facing as a non-profit long-term care provider.

Local affordable housing would reduce the number of vehicles on the road, as more employees would be able to walk, bike, or use public transportation. This would benefit efforts to reduce pollution. It would also drastically reduce the number of vehicles parking in the neighborhood surrounding Channing House.

Your prompt attention to this need would greatly help our efforts to recruit the employees who are critical to the very important services that we provide at Channing House.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rhonda Bekkedahl  
CEO  
650-324-7596



**From:** [Patty Irish](#)  
**To:** [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda item: Affordable Housing in Downtown Palo Alto  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 5, 2023 12:59:01 PM  
**Attachments:** [Letter to Council for Affordable Housing on downtown parking lots 12-5-23.docx](#)

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Attached in my letter to the Mayor and All the City Council members.

Please add to your considerations of the important issue.

Patty Irish

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Patty Irish  
850 Webster St. #628  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
650-324-7407   
650-245-3906  cell

How do you tell a story that has been told the wrong way for so long?

December 5, 2023

Dear Madame Mayor and Council Members:

I am writing to you in support of using downtown parking lots to build subsidized, affordable housing. The need is urgent to provide housing for many of the workers we need to provide the services for our area employers. And we will need even more in the future.

I live at Channing House, on Webster, and we have 175 employees. Many of them drive over an hour to come to work. We will need more in our future too.

As you know, these projects take time to complete. Funding is complex. I hope you will act very efficiently as the need is GREAT. The sites you are considering in our downtown are excellent. They are near transportation, jobs, services and schools!

Also I believe I read Alta Housing was also proposing to include public space in their application for Senior Housing on the parking lot near Avenidas. This public space might be large enough for the noon meal plan provided for Seniors that does not presently have a downtown location to serve them.

Please move quickly and positively on some of these sites so that we might actually produce needed housing in the next 2-3 years!

Thank you for your serious consideration for the need to act and act now.

Sincerely,

Patty Irish

850 Webster St. #628

Palo Alto, CA 94301

650-324-7407