

From: [Charlotte Epstein](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Subject: Item 13 on January 23 agenda: 575 Los Trancos Road
Date: Monday, January 23, 2023 10:39:40 AM

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Dear Mayor Kou, Vice Mayor Stone, and Palo Alto Council Members,

My name is Charlotte Epstein and I am a Palo Alto resident who cares deeply about our City's wildlife and natural environment. I am a long time member of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society who alerted me to this issue. I am deeply interested in protecting the land and its wildlife for today and for tomorrow. I believe that the SCVAS view of this project takes in consideration how to moderate the project to best preserve the land and its wildlife while allowing for the house to be built after appropriate modifications are made.

Here are the suggestions from the SCVAS -

The proposed house is too close to Los Trancos Creek, and unless the project is modified, it is likely to significantly impede animal movement, harm the riparian corridor and deprive the creek of the buffer it needs to maintain water quality for steelhead trout, and render the creek more vulnerable to landslides and flooding.

Please decline to approve the project, and ask the homeowner to:

- Require that the project be re-designed at a minimum of 55 feet from the top of the bank of Los Trancos creek (in line with the neighboring home) to reduce the impacts on the riparian ecosystem of Los Trancos Creek and allow wildlife movement along the creek. No roads or fences or structures should be allowed in the buffer area.

In addition,

- Due to California's prolonged drought and regional aridification, disallowing a swimming pool should also be considered to allow more space for relocation of the home further from the creek and for saving water.
- Require implementation of all the recommendations that were submitted by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District including disinfectant protocols to prevent spreading of sudden-oak death in the Los Trancos Valley.
- Require all outdoor lighting to be dimmable and in the yellowish range (2700 Kelvin or less) to reduce light pollution and the attraction of migratory birds and insects.
- Require that all glass surfaces apply effective Bird-Safety glazing treatment to protect birds from colliding with windows and other glass elements.

Thank you,
Charlotte Epstein
2192 Waverley St

From: [Carolyn Davidson](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Item 13 on City Council agenda, 575 Los Trancos Road
Date: Monday, January 23, 2023 9:19:13 AM

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Dear Mayor Kou, Vice Mayor Stone, and Palo Alto Council Members,

My name is Carolyn Davidson, and I am a Palo Alto resident who cares deeply about our City's wildlife and natural environment.

The proposed house is too close to Los Trancos Creek, and unless the project is modified, it is likely to significantly impede animal movement, harm the riparian corridor, deprive the creek of the buffer it needs to maintain water quality for steelhead trout, and render the creek more vulnerable to landslides and flooding.

Please decline to approve the project, and ask the homeowner to:

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In addition,

- Require implementation of all the recommendations that were submitted by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District including disinfectant protocols to prevent spreading of sudden oak death in the Los Trancos Valley.
- Require all outdoor lighting to be dimmable and in the yellowish range (2700 Kelvin or less) to reduce light pollution and the attraction of migratory birds and insects.
- Require that all glass surfaces apply effective bird-safety glazing treatment to protect birds from colliding with windows and other glass elements.

Thank you,
Carolyn Davidson
1919 Barbara Drive, Palo Alto 94303

From: [E Nigenda](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Fwd: Ask Palo Alto to Protect Los Trancos Creek
Date: Monday, January 23, 2023 8:04:28 AM

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Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I agree with Green Foothills that our City's required setback of 20 feet from the creek is insufficient for adequate creek protection.

I request that the City's municipal code be updated as soon as possible to require a riparian setback of 150 feet and that a minimum of 55 feet from the creek be required for this project as recommended by Green Foothills.

"The Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan suggests that in open space areas like this one, riparian setbacks for development should be 150 feet, which is what Santa Clara County requires in their jurisdiction. Unfortunately, Palo Alto has not yet updated its antiquated ordinance to comply with the Comprehensive Plan".

In addition, I ask that all possible measures be taken to protect the existing ecosystems and to minimize the impacts of this project during and after construction.

Thank you for your service to our community,
Esther Nigenda

image of ...

Photo credit: Ray Krebs, flickr

On Monday, January 23, the Palo Alto City Council will consider approving a monster home on an open space parcel far up in the foothills above Palo Alto. The house would be too close to the bank of Los Trancos Creek, which could result in erosion and landslides into the creek, impacts to sensitive species, and blocking of wildlife movement along the creek corridor. [Please email the City Council](#) and ask them to require changes to the project to mitigate these impacts.

[Email the City Council](#)

What's Happening

A landowner has proposed a 7,200 square foot home, plus an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) and swimming pool, on an open-space-zoned site in the Palo Alto foothills. This mansion is a mere 20 feet away from the bank of Los Trancos Creek, which provides critical habitat for threatened and endangered species and a movement pathway for animals.

The Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan suggests that in open space areas like this one, riparian setbacks for development should be 150 feet, which is what Santa Clara County requires in their jurisdiction. Unfortunately, Palo Alto has not yet updated its antiquated ordinance to comply with the Comprehensive Plan; thus a 20-foot setback is all that is required. However, the City Council has discretionary authority to direct the landowner to modify the project because it is located in an ecologically sensitive area. We are recommending a 55-foot setback, which would be in line with neighboring homes, and for the Council to require bird-safe design, outdoor lighting restrictions, and protocols to control the spread of Sudden Oak Death during construction.

Why It Matters

The recent storms, with their subsequent mudslides and flooding, have clearly demonstrated that if we disrespect and neglect our creeks, people's homes will suffer the consequences. The foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains are notoriously erosion-prone, as witnessed by the brown sediment coloring our creeks and floodwaters in recent weeks. When we allow construction too close to creek banks, the resulting erosion dumps tons of sediment into creek channels, increasing future flood risk.

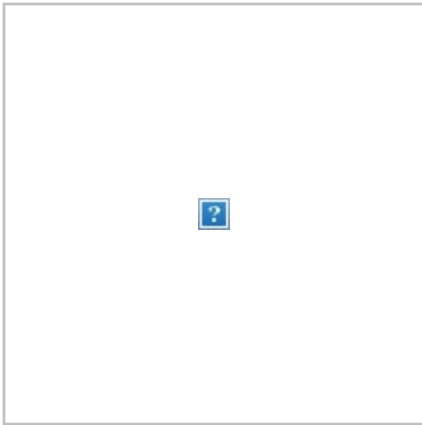
Also, putting homes too close to creek corridors is harmful to wildlife. Almost all of our local species use creek corridors at some point of their life history — for drinking, for breeding, for nesting, for shelter, and for migration and movement in the landscape. Los Trancos Creek supports critical habitat for threatened steelhead trout as well as threatened and endangered frogs and salamanders. Furthermore, creek corridors are critically important as movement pathways for larger animals like mountain lions, bobcats and badgers. A home 20 feet from the top of the creek bank is very likely to impede the movement of these animals.

What You Can Do

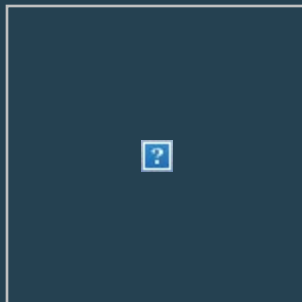
Please email the Palo Alto City Council and ask them to require changes to the project to protect the creek, wildlife, and riparian habitat.

Email the City Council

Sincerely,



Alice Kaufman
Policy and Advocacy Director



If you haven't already, consider making a [monthly donation of \\$20, \\$10, or \\$5](#) to support this work so that we can create the greatest impact. Your gift will ensure that there is a champion for local nature and will empower a new generation of environmental activists.

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Palo Alto, CA 94303
United States
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From: [Shani Kleinhaus](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Foley, Emily](#); [Gerhardt, Jodie](#); [Barbara Kelsey](#); [James Eggers](#); [Mike Ferreira](#)
Subject: Item 13 on the 1/12/23 agenda: 575 Los Trancos Road
Date: Sunday, January 22, 2023 5:02:07 PM
Attachments: [575 Los Trancos comments January 22, 2023.docx.pdf](#)

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Dear Mayor Kou and Palo Alto Council Members,

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) and the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter (SCLP) are environmental organizations that work to protect natural resources and promote the enjoyment of nature. We provided comments on the draft IS/MND for the 575 Los Trancos Project, and we remain concerned after reading the responses to our comments and further study of the project and the CEQA documents. We submit the attached letter to your consideration.

Respectfully,

Shani Kleinhaus for Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

Mike Ferreira for the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

From: [Hong-Ha Vuong](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Item 13 on January 23 agenda: 575 Los Trancos Road
Date: Sunday, January 22, 2023 10:21:36 AM

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Dear Mayor Kou, Vice Mayor Stone and Palo Alto Council Members,

My name is Thi-Hong-Ha Vuong and I am a Palo Alto resident.

The proposed mansion is too close to Los Trancos Creek, and unless the project is modified, it is likely to significantly impede animal movement, harm the riparian corridor and deprive the creek of the buffer it needs to maintain water quality for steelhead trout, and render the creek more vulnerable to landslides and flooding.

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In addition,

Require implementation of all the recommendations that were submitted by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District including disinfectant protocols to prevent spreading of sudden-oak death in the Los Trancos Valley.

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Require that all glass surfaces apply effective Bird-Safety glazing treatment to protect birds from colliding with windows and other glass elements.

Thank you,

Thi-Hong-Ha Vuong
hongha.vuong@sbcglobal.net
236 Scripps Court
Palo Alto, CA 94306

From: [Nancy Olson](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Item 13 on January 23 agenda: 575 Los Trancos Road
Date: Saturday, January 21, 2023 7:31:27 PM

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Dear Mayor Kou, Vice Mayor Stone and Palo Alto Council Members,

My name is Nancy Olson and I am a Palo Alto resident who cares deeply about our City's wildlife and natural environment.

The proposed mansion is too close to Los Trancos Creek, and unless the project is modified, it is likely to significantly impede animal movement, harm the riparian corridor and deprive the creek of the buffer it needs to maintain water quality for steelhead trout, and render the creek more vulnerable to landslides and flooding.

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- Require that all glass surfaces apply effective Bird-Safety glazing treatment to protect birds from colliding with windows and other glass elements.

Thank you,

Nancy Olson
2431 Bryant Street
Palop Alto CA 94301-4205