

From: [Jeanine Valadez](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEM #1 – 10/26/ 2021: Study Session
Date: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 1:27:09 PM

Date: 10/26/2021

To: The Honorable Members of the Los Altos City Council, the City Manager, the City Attorney

From: Jeanine Valadez

CC: The City Clerk

Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEM #1 – 10/26/2021: Study Session: Los Altos Housing Element Update and Community Engagement Strategy: Overview of the Housing Element Update and the components of the Community Outreach and Engagement Plan (J. Biggs, G. Persicone)

Disclosure: I am a member of PARC; however, I submit this public comment as a private resident of Los Altos.

Dear Councilmembers, City Manager, et al.,

I am writing to encourage the Council and Staff to take a hopeful mindset as they craft our Housing Element. Working together with your community, we can make Los Altos a more welcoming city, one that demonstrates care for all its residents and workers. Moreover, we can do this without destroying our city's character. The character of which I speak is not the look and feel of the geography and its domiciles. Instead, I speak of the tone and tenor of how we all interact with each other. I speak of the principles of fairness, inclusion and friendliness we share. Most importantly, I think the test of our character lies in understanding that change is not something to fear, but is something to embrace because, with good planning and foresight, change allows us to have more fulfilling lives.

You are facing a loud minority of residents opposed to change and specifically opposed to increased housing. Studies have shown that, on the whole, Californians throughout the state realize that we need more housing. They also believe that urban sprawl is bad for everyone, but especially harmful to the environment. The fact remains: If we want our community and our neighboring communities to continue to thrive with great jobs, great schools, and great opportunities for all, we must build more housing, and we must build it within our current cities.

What puzzles me is how any resident can be against more housing. Current homeowners in Los Altos are the beneficiaries of such progressive mindsets of the past. Virtually *everyone* in Los Altos lives on property that was subdivided or otherwise made supportive of denser housing in the past.

Today's Study Session is focused on Outreach and Community Engagement. I support you in creating a robust and expansive outreach program, one comprised of many outreach activities, that engages many community segments, and targets laser-beam focus on the underserved, insecure, and unhoused.

Specifically, I support the following endeavors and encourage the Council and Staff to

consider them today in this session:

- 1) Conduct in depth studies of the in-process Housing Element Outreach Strategies of Mountain View and Saratoga and replicate them. Both cities have outlined and have already undertaken excellent outreach plans well ahead of us. While I value inventiveness and new ideas, I discourage getting mired in reinventing the wheel at the expense of maximizing the time spent on actual Community Outreach.
- 2) Create Task Forces comprised of a mix of City staff and residents who are specifically (and narrowly) chartered to focus on engaging specific residential segments otherwise unlikely to participate: renters, caregivers/nurses/therapists/home-help, grocery/food service/retail clerks, residents who already use community services, the undocumented (create Safe Spaces through an ordinance), residents and workers with disabilities, teachers/instructional aides/lower-ladder administrative, young adults (<30), community college students, the unhoused, etc. Incentivize participation with raffles, meals, gift certificates, and such.
- 3) Over-publicize education opportunities. There is still a lot of misinformation or lack of information on what the Housing Element is and how the law applies to us. Some key misunderstandings are that the Housing Element is only about affordable housing, or only about building 10 story structures, or forcing people to sell their homes, or really about building “Projects” here. Education must not only teach facts; it must discourage extrapolated presumptions and dispel falsehoods.
- 4) Over-publicize engagement activities (virtual and in person) throughout the city using various means: hang banners, place sandwich boards, create webforms, surveys, and a Housing Element phone app, push emails and texts, put letters and ads in LATC, create template ads/brochures and distribute those to advocacy groups to share with their constituencies, flood social media, post QR reader codes everywhere (schools, retail, city buildings, on the street).
- 5) Work redundancy into the engagement activities: each meeting topic should be repeated three times: once during the business-weekday, once during a work-week evening 7pm or later, and once on the weekend.
- 6) Err on the side of transparency and early publishing when it comes to where city owned parcels are, where the city is considering adding housing, potential areas for rezoning, and updates on program ideas the Council is contemplating. You have allies throughout the city who, if exposed to early information, can help you derive solutions that can work in various neighborhood ecosystems; they can also help you espouse solutions to others.
- 7) Derive a promotion strategy that amplifies the benefits and moral imperatives behind adhering to the California State mandate that Los Altos must “Affirmatively Further Fair Housing” in its Housing Element decisions.

Thanks for reading,

Jeanine Valadez
32-year resident of Los Altos

From: [Andrea Chelemengos](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: FW: City Council Study Session, Oct 26th, Agenda Item # 1 - Housing Element
Date: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:55:24 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Sincerely,



Andrea M. Chelemengos, MMC
City Clerk | City of Los Altos

1 N. San Antonio Road | Los Altos, CA | 94022
Direct: (650) 947-2610
achelemengos@losaltosca.gov

From: patriciaaeavans@[REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 12:36 AM
To: patriciaaeavans@sbcglobal.net
Subject: City Council Study Session, Oct 26th, Agenda Item # 1 - Housing Element

I have lived in Los Altos for forty-two years and raised my children here and am now dismayed that they cannot afford to live here. My son is disabled and requires our support, but he lives in Section 8 housing in another community because there is little very-low-income housing in Los Altos. Our daughter is a lawyer working for the government, but cannot afford to buy a condominium near us. And the caregivers we might like to have helping us as we age cannot afford to live nearby.

Los Altos has a moral and legal responsibility to provide its share of the affordable housing needed in the area. Yet all I see is a defeatist and resistant attitude, for example in the recent appeal of the RHNA, which only costs us all more money.

These are the steps that I would like to see to make real progress in developing a housing element:

1. Publish a detailed plan, including schedule and deliverables, for completing the housing element. Keep the public up to date on progress against the plan.
2. Investigate other municipalities, including Bay Area cities like Mountain View and Saratoga, and some of the southern CA cities who are finalizing their draft elements, to see what they are doing, what works and doesn't work.
3. Publish promptly a list of properties that the city could consider developing for housing with information such as size, current zoning, ownership, location vis a vis transportation and shopping, and issues such as parking. Publish other housing element materials as soon as possible, leaving time for public review and comment before submittal to HCD or adoption by the city council.
4. Involve stakeholders MUCH MORE, including the faith community, city employees, teachers and first responders, downtown workers, domestic workers, and renters, as well as developers, businesses and homeowners. This cannot be done in the two stakeholder meetings as planned in the contract with the consultant. San Juan Capistrano provided child care and a meal with a program in Spanish to get input from lower-income workers in the community and not surprisingly heard very different issues than when meeting with

older homeowners. Why can't Los Altos be creative in hearing the views of those often left out of the discussion?

Thank you for your consideration,
Patricia Evans

From: [Andrea Chelemengos](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: FW: City Council Study Session, Oct 26th, Agenda Item # 1 - Housing Element
Date: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:52:43 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Sincerely,



Andrea M. Chelemengos, MMC
City Clerk | City of Los Altos

1 N. San Antonio Road | Los Altos, CA | 94022

Direct: (650) 947-2610

achelemengos@losaltosca.gov

From: Susan Russell [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 25, 2021 9:00 PM
To: Neysa Fligor <nfligor@losaltosca.gov>; Anita Enander <aenander@losaltosca.gov>; Lynette Lee Eng <lynetteleeeng@sbcglobal.net>; Sally Meadows <smeadows@losaltosca.gov>; Jonathan Weinberg <jweinberg@losaltosca.gov>
Cc: Gabriel Engeland <gengeland@losaltosca.gov>; Jon Biggs <jbiggs@losaltosca.gov>; Guido Persicone <gpersicone@losaltosca.gov>; Andrea Chelemengos <achelemengos@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: City Council Study Session, Oct 26th, Agenda Item # 1 - Housing Element

Dear Mayor Fligor and Members of the City Council:

Re: City Council Study Session, Oct. 26th, Agenda Item #1 – Housing Element Outreach

I am writing because of my concern at what looks like very limited outreach planned for this Housing Element. It appears that a maximum of 2 short stakeholder meetings is planned. There are many groups who should be included as “stakeholders”, in my opinion, including market-rate developers, affordable housing developers, community advocacy groups, those who work in Los Altos, but particularly those who are low-wage earners working in restaurants or grocery stores, faith-based groups, business owners and of course the public in general. Outreach is key to developing a compliant and meaningful Housing Element. Please provide assurances and specifics on the robust public outreach that is planned, whether by Lisa Wise Consulting or City Staff.

Sue Russell

744 Los Altos Avenue

From: [Donna Davies](#)
To: [Public Comment](#); CityCouncil@losaltosca.gov
Cc: [Donna Davies](#)
Subject: City Council Study Session, October 26 Agenda Item # 1 - Housing Element
Date: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 8:33:44 AM

Hello Members of the Council and City Staff,

I would like to comment on the development of the Housing Element for Los Altos in this new RHNA cycle. The reason I am a housing activist is that I have thoroughly enjoyed living in Mountain View for the past 33 years but have been increasingly dismayed by the rising imbalance of jobs to housing. I think both our towns can maintain or even heighten their beauty, character, and effectiveness by adding the required number of housing units.

I appreciate your plan to hold many meetings this year to converse with all the many stakeholders you have identified. Please make this process as transparent, inclusive, and equitable as possible. In addition, I hope you will make the site inventory available very soon to allow for public review and comment.

Thank you,
Donna Davies

From: [patriciaevans](#) [REDACTED]
To: [Public Comment; CityCouncil@losaltosca.gov](#)
Cc: [housingelement@hcd.ca.gov](#)
Subject: City Council Study Session, Oct 26th, Agenda Item # 1 - Housing Element
Date: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 12:21:17 AM

I have lived in Los Altos for forty-two years and raised my children here and am now dismayed that they cannot afford to live here. My son is disabled and requires our support, but he lives in Section 8 housing in another community because there is little very-low-income housing in Los Altos. Our daughter is a lawyer working for the government, but cannot afford to buy a condominium near us. And the caregivers we might like to have helping us as we age cannot afford to live nearby.

Los Altos has a moral and legal responsibility to provide its share of the affordable housing needed in the area. Yet all I see is a defeatist and resistant attitude, for example in the recent appeal of the RHNA, which only costs us all more money.

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3. Promptly publish a list of properties that the city could consider developing for housing with information such as size, current zoning, ownership, location vis a vis transportation and shopping, and issues such as parking. Publish other housing element materials as soon as possible, leaving time for public review and comment before submittal to HCD or adoption by the city council.
4. Involve stakeholders MUCH MORE, including the faith community, city employees, teachers and first responders, downtown workers, domestic workers, and renters, as well as developers, businesses and homeowners. This cannot be done in the two stakeholder meetings as planned in the contract with the consultant. San Juan Capistrano provided child care and a meal with a program in Spanish to get input from lower-income workers in the community and not surprisingly heard very different issues than when meeting with older homeowners. Why can't Los Altos be creative in hearing the views of those often left out of the discussion?

Thank you for your consideration,

Patricia Evans

From: [Anne Paulson](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Public Comment](#); [Gabriel Engeland](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM 1 - 10.26.2021 STUDY SESSION.
Date: Monday, October 25, 2021 10:26:53 PM

Dear Mayor Fligor and City Council,

Thank you for beginning the Housing Element process. It's a big job, and we have tough decisions ahead of us. I write to urge you to ensure that as the city creates our Housing Element, the preliminary site inventory and the preliminary program list be made available to the public well before the draft is completed, so that we may be able to review them before they are included in the Draft.

Thank you.

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-- Anne Paulson