



PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

The following is public correspondence received by the City Clerk's Office after the posting of the original agenda. Individual contact information has been redacted for privacy. This may *not* be a comprehensive collection of the public correspondence, but staff makes its best effort to include all correspondence received to date.

To send correspondence to the City Council, on matters listed on the agenda please email PublicComment@losaltosca.gov

Reconsideration Packard Foundation #7

Dear Council Members

Please have the Packard Foundation go back and present a new plan for their proposed parking lot, charging stations and Solar structure.

The Climate Action Plan developed by the Environmental Commission and the City says the KEY ACTION needed is to “Increase urban tree canopy*Create water efficient buildings and landscape* Implement water recycling and natural water harvesting systems”

The current plan removes 27 trees, has a huge five lot slab of asphalt, and a tremendous solar structure spanning the bulk of the area. It is completely opposite than what is needed to meet the key goals of the Climate action plan.

The Packard foundation has given inadequate reasons for this current plan as they do not need more parking spaces for employees who work remotely.

The ATMP needs to be reinstated or a new one drawn up as this is a new project with new challenges that need to be monitored. It was the recommendation of the Complete Streets Commission to do so. The Packard foundation certainly can have 21 charging stations instead of 41. It would then allow for a much smaller solar panel structure and provide more space for more trees and native plants.

The Packard Foundation Claims on their Web Page to care about the native environment. They say the “plantings provide familiar food and shelter for local birds and insects and attract native pollinators. “ Yet they seek City to destroy this valuable asset .

The Packard Foundation sits at the entrance to downtown next to other parking lots. As a resident of Los Altos, I do not want to see all concrete and asphalt at the entrance to our town.

Please see attached photo of the tree canopy that was sliced in half by the Packard Foundation Protected trees need to be protected.

Sincerely

Roberta Phillips

HERE
TO
PEDESTRIANS



From: [carol little](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Public Comment](#)
Subject: The Packard Foundation parking lot
Date: Saturday, November 27, 2021 6:39:46 PM

Dear Council Members,

There are at least two things to consider when contemplating the proposed Packard Foundation parking lot. One, does it meet the downtown design guidelines as well as other Los Altos planning documents? Two, does it present a good match for an entrance to our downtown shopping and business district? In addition to those two considerations, I ask that you consider the environment.

Does the proposed parking lot design meet the downtown guidelines? No, it does not meet them.

The following pages and details are provided to highlight how the proposed project fails to meet the guidelines and more.

Downtown Design Guidelines

Page 54, 4.1 Pedestrian Environment:

“A strong pedestrian orientation is expected.

- a) Underground parking is strongly encouraged
- c) Limit the exposure of surface parking lots along street
- d) Provide access to parking from passages and less traveled pedestrian routes whenever possible.
- e) Limit the width of parking access drives as much as possible.
- f) Limit access and parking lot paving to those areas that are functionally required, and provide landscaping in all other areas.
- g) Where parking lots must abut a public street or a pedestrian walkway, provide a minimum landscaped setback of 5 feet, and provide low walls or box hedges to screen

parked cars from direct view.

h) Special textured paving that is porous and minimizes water runoff in surface parking lots I strongly encouraged.”

Page 66 also addresses the design expectations for parking lots. Again, consistent with all of the guidelines, minimizing the impact of parking lots is at the top of the list.

Page 70,

5.3 LANDSCAPE

Substantial landscaping is expected in the First Street District to ensure that the area becomes a visual part of the larger downtown village.

b) Tree landscaping should be provided to create an orchard canopy effect in surface parking lots with more than one drive aisle. Utilize landscape fingers placed parallel to the parking spaces to break up expanses of parking lot paving. Space the islands with intervals not exceeding 6 parking spaces in length.

c) Utilize hedges, trees, and other landscaping between facing parking spaces as shown in the example to the left.

5.3.4 Add Street trees along all parcel street frontages

Over and over again, the guidelines provide the precise details of what a parking lot is supposed to look like in our downtown district.

This particular project has even more requirements because it abuts a dense (more coming soon) residential area and is a major entrance to our downtown area.

That means this particular parking lot proposal must meet the requirements for the impact on residential areas and entrance to downtown. The current proposal does not.

Yet another document provides guidance for how the downtown is intended to look. The Los Altos Downtown Design Plan.

The document is also meant for the following: “City Planning, Staff and Planning Commission will also use this Plan as a conceptual basis for evaluating the merits of new projects and proposed rehabilitation projects.” (p2) The rest of the document reinforces trees, trees and more trees, as well as small and village character goals.

Of course, design is only part of the conversation regarding any development in the downtown, or elsewhere in Los Altos.

Next, consider the environment.

The environment is another major component of doing the right thing for Los Altos and in an even more impactful way, the world.

If there is any doubt that saving mature trees and requiring low impact design guidelines with regard to a parking lot is frivolous, please follow this link to a video featuring Greta Thunberg. <https://www.conservation.org/video/nature-now-video-with-greta-thunberg>

If the video isn't convincing enough to save all mature trees, consider how much water it requires to water in a newly tree when compared to what an established tree requires. Established trees require water one to two times per month, whereas new trees require water every few days. With drought being the new normal, there is no water to spare. It also takes at least 30 to 50 years for a tree to mature, the planet and the children cannot wait for such growth.

It is time to be good stewards of the environment. Council members are in a position to set an example by holding everyone to the same standards. There are guidelines for parking lots in Los Altos and the current Packard Foundation proposed parking lot does not meet them. Please, consider all aspects of this project and consider alternatives. All alternatives must include keeping the mature trees. Any good architect can manage that task.

Some alternatives.

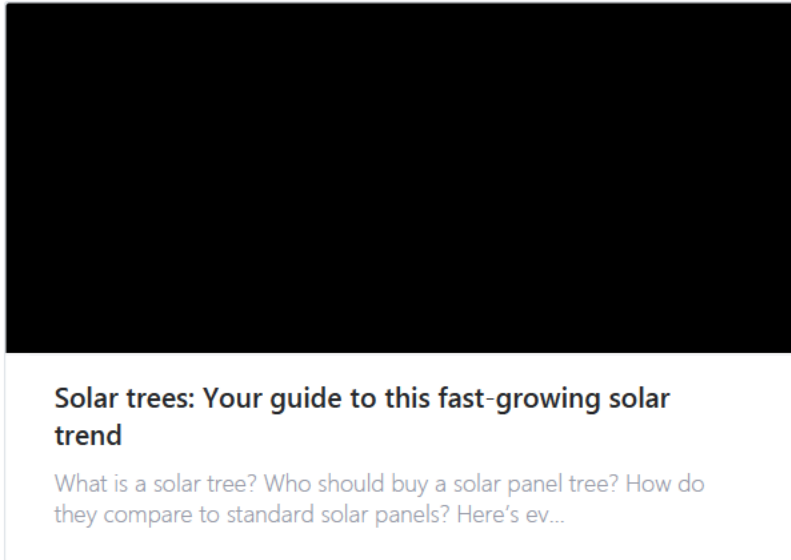
Alternative one:

Underground parking lot with a living roof and/or some solar panels. Of course, also significant landscaping all around in order to address required landscaping for residential areas.

Alternative two:

Surface lot with permeable surface and solar trees. See picture below and link here for solar tree examples.

[Solar trees: Your guide to this fast-growing solar trend](#)



Option three:

Reduce the number of charging stations, so the size of the solar panel can also be reduced in size. That would possibly allow for more trees and native plants

All options should include working with a LEED certified architect and an experienced arborist.

Enough hand wringing about the environment and what we can all do to protect it. Do the right thing. Save the planet by saving the trees and by following correct design guidelines for Los Altos. Ask the Packard Foundation to live up to their own high standards and LEED Certification reputation.

Require a parking plaza that is appropriate as an entrance to Los Altos, meets the design guidelines, downplays the space as a parking lot, protects the mature trees that are already thriving, and matches the Packard Foundation.

This can be done with a little creativity and planning.

Thank you for considering my input.

Respectfully yours,

Teresa Morris

From: [Bill Hough](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Andrea Chelemengos](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT Item #7, November 30, 2021
Date: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 7:05:11 PM

This project still stinks out loud because it will needlessly remove mature trees and destroy land that should be converted into a small public park into just another unattractive parking lot.

The currently vacant space on the west side of 2nd Street could be improved at minimal expense into two attractive parks, something seriously lacking in downtown. Is it really necessary for the Packard Foundation to add an additional 28 parking spaces? In this time of COVID, it has become obvious that most white collar work can be performed from home, which should reduce the demand for parking downtown. Lets encourage more working from home going forward.

It is not too late to vote "no" on this proposal.

Bill Hough
Los Altos

From: [Pat Marriot](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT Item 7 November 30, 2021
Date: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 4:09:47 PM

Council Members:

Thank you, Councilman Weinberg and Councilwoman Enander for bringing this item back for another look.

There are unanswered questions about the plan to pave over all the Packard parking area and remove many trees that made this project so attractive when it was first built.

Back in 2015, Councilwoman Megan Satterlee conducted walking tours to get feedback on the many new buildings that went up downtown. Some of the comments on the Packard building were:

Beautiful design.
I love going by Packard. Like a little forest. Wonderful.
I like the Packard bldg. open space & setbacks. Proper way to do redevelopment.
Doing well with parking management. Good. Living in limit. CAN be done. Useful public benefit, cheaper than building parking structure.
Like landscaping of Packard. Peaceful feeling Birds, nature downtown that's missing elsewhere.
Beautiful design: long, low flowing buildings. The architect obviously developed the plan with Los Altos in mind.
Gorgeous and fits with our town very nicely.
It is a stellar project. The building is fitting for Los Altos and the drought resistant landscaping is a guide for using less water.
I like it <u>a lot</u> .
I like the Packard building a lot. It has a great site and the landscaping softens the space.

This project did everything right and set an example for green downtown development. The agreement said, "The development rights conferred hereby are justified in part by Owner's unique philanthropic business operation, its unusually **low employee counts and vehicular parking demand**, its innovative demonstration of the feasibility of commercial-scale "LEED Platinum" construction methods, and its successful Alternative Transportation."

It's not clear why Packard now wants more parking and so many EV chargers. Do they have more employees? How many employees drive electric cars? How many work from home?

Replacing trees in unspecified places will not save us from a barren parking lot overshadowed by a solar panel roof.

Pat Marriott