



May 15, 2024

To: Mayor Stone, Vice Mayor Lauing, Council Members, City Staff
Cc: Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)

RE: Public Comment on City of Palo Alto Housing Element Third Revision 6th Cycle (2023-2031)

The League of Women Voters believes that affordable housing for all income levels is a basic human need. Indeed, it is the responsibility of all levels of government to address that need. The Housing Element Update is a crucial step in meeting that responsibility. We have reviewed the City's third revised Housing Element and have the following comments.

The City's Housing Element needs to ensure that sufficient land is designated and zoned to accommodate assigned RHNA goals affordable to all income levels. It also needs to include preservation and anti-displacement programs to protect existing unsubsidized low-and moderate-income renters and owners in Palo Alto. To reach these goals Housing Element should be revised to:

- Affirmatively Further Fair Housing by dispersing the low- and moderate-income units throughout the community rather than concentrating the majority in the GM/ROLM district which has higher air pollution than the rest of the city and lacks amenities such as bikeways, public transit, parks, schools, and retail
- Expand the City's program to develop low and moderate housing over city-owned parking lots from two structures to six
- Add density and height to the transit center area which has existing amenities such as parks, public transit, bike lanes, retail, libraries, and schools, as proposed by Stanford, and take advantage of MTA funding for transit-oriented projects. Locating housing near the transit center will reduce car dependency, a City goal
- Adopt a City program that identifies existing unsubsidized units which could be converted into permanently affordable mixed income housing and identify and generate bond funding through a joint powers or similar agency
- Strengthen tenant protection by developing a City program to fund right to counsel for tenants.

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature, on the left, is "Judy Kleinberg" and the second, on the right, is "Nancy Shepherd".

Judy Kleinberg and Nancy Shepherd, Co-Presidents